

# THE DIAL

MARCH 1923

## THE KNEELING WOMAN

BY PAUL MORAND

*Translated from the French by Florence Nelson Llona*

THE Tavern had anchored at the corner of the boulevard. In a chemically-pure twilight, the passengers summoned lazy liquids, slow-descending syrups from the bottoms of glasses. It was the hour when, forsaking their glass-roofed ceramic palaces, the artists glide, rubber-heeled, towards the café. They feel loftier and weary of being clever. Big splotches of sunlight butter the asphalt. The boulevard makes laborious angles, glutted boia. One can take pleasure or alarm at all the shops: art potteries, liberal arts, mechanical arts, poetic art, dental art, peasant art, art of pleasing.

At the terrace, they were already preparing the tables for dinner. A breeze manufactured in Montrouge lifted the paper tablecloths and the aluminium forks and spoons. Within, there was a permanent exposition of the Rue la Boétie and Boulevard Raspail masters. Between canvases plastered with duplicity or violence, placards proclaimed:

MOULES, ESCARGOTS,  
CABINETS PARTICULIERS.

"Everything that makes you sick," someone pointed out.

On the *banquette*, his back to the window, Thor Magnus sounded like an emptying bath-tub as he drank. Plaited sandals, dove-coloured homespun, maroon sweater, and sand-paper pate. 100,000 Kr. from an honourable Stockholm family for any one who will

return him to the Magnus domicile, Kardnausmakaregatan, No. 18. He would gain by exchanging Boulevard Raspail, that Secession artery, for streets that end in white yachts, the sea-gulls in umbrellas, the blue and silver sentries at the angles of brick residences, all those voices so fresh from being borne by water, the equestrian statues of Gustav Wasa charging the crazy clouds. But the magic of Paris has no equal. This giant dissolves peacefully and sinks into the hospitable Montparnasse bitumen. He left Upsala one night, in evening clothes, loaded with aqua-vitae, leaving the memory of a marvellous being, frenzied in his cholers and mirth, among the students.

Thor, to No. 428, is a fabulous babe. (Thor numbers each girl who enlists for him. This broadens his views on the subject of happiness.) She liked the craggy access of him, his pumps, his bracelets, his plucky painting, his blue shirt, and how he forbade her to live the way she used to before she met him.

But he irritates her so with his vacant face like people who win fat lottery prizes, that for the past two hours, she has been wishing him dead.

"What are you thinking about?"

In one breath she answers, "Nothing, you, I love you."

Of course, there were the Sundays at Marika's, watching, from the depths of a bed, the Seine flow by; the wrestling championship matches at the Casino de Paris; the art nights at the house of the Plaine Monceau lady-explorer, where they burn violet things; the Sundays in Robinson riding a horse that every passer-by knows by name; the accordion at the Plateau-Central dance-hall, place Maubert; the Bourgeuil at Manière's; the opium-den Rue Cortambert; capital executions; and Fyscher's joint, shrimp-pink, perfumed with cold cigar-smoke like an appointment-house chemise. But all that no longer suffices No. 428. She feels like being alone, partaking of calm as if with a spoon, entering the near-by cemetery where granite cars pursue the silent voyage, going away. . . . Melancholy of nights that let themselves fall—old curtain tired of having served so long—closed shutters, relaxation of obscurity when humanity slackens and appears atrociously aged and stupid. No. 428 realizes that she will have to cut and run.

It is an art, old as women. They say that flight is the weapon of the weak. On the contrary, the weak always stick. One should

know when to decamp. When to do what, impulsive and automatic, No. 428 is doing at this instant: get up slowly, with an air of saying, "Wait for me—I'm going to the wash-room, don't ask me any questions," cross the café, go out another door, make for the street, the Gare de Lyon, the Marseilles express, and pass through Dijon two hours later, with no other baggage than the *Intran*, on account of the serial.

No. 428, or to be exact, Diana—since here she is restored to herself—has often decamped. She must bolt it when her heart "grabs at her," as she tells the doctor. As insensible to catastrophes as mystic feet to broken glass, she bolts headlong. Thus she has already thrown up her school, her family, the Legion of Honour, and occasional good things—redoubtable strongholds to be evacuated directly ennui lays siege. The returns differed: forgotten, pardoned, recompensed, beaten. It is the irreparable suddenness of the exit and the unknown quality of the return that she likes. Even as a child, she had wished that there were not only prizes, but punishments in the games of chance.

Beaune, Pommard, Clos-Vougeot, the inebriated coach now descends the famous vintages, as with the roast, the finger descends the wine-list. The tavern and its sour beer recede: emptied of emotion, memories lighten, are expelled by a fragrance of grass and parched earth. At last a night that doesn't reek of melted cheese and the wild-cherrywood pipe that Thor has a habit of seasoning in bed at night, while concocting landscapes with the assistance of geometrical bits of pasteboard. What is he doing at twelve minutes past twelve? He must have waited for his No. 428, grown astonished, indignant, clamoured for her at the cloak-room, gotten drunk, forgotten, been happy. He will liquor up for forty-eight hours, performing on those silent trumpets, which, says he, make music within. Next he will tackle the search for Diana, and the situation will become serious.

All this on account of Sainte Colombe. She has suddenly recollected that hamlet, caught on Mont Ventoux. Black firs, blue mountains, and—she is for tricoloured landscapes—white houses, peeled readily off a brutal sky. All of which seemly; the peaks themselves clothed in modesty. The air, exhilarating, effervescent, stinging the nostrils.

The church—a stable where the natives, gathered about God,

ruminated. There, two years ago, on an excursion, she had felt simultaneously so commendable and so detestable that she got a stomach-ache. But one forgets and softens again. That evening, above the Lion de Belfort, Sainte Colombe had loomed steadfast, inevitable. Blackened pokers, the firs stirred up the sunset. All that awaited her. . . . Prisoner intoxicated by liberation, she rushes on in express No. 5, in her head a song, monotonous as the busy signal.

Steps lead down into the church, for it was below the street level, on the site of ancient Roman baths, and besides, it had gradually sunk. The stones—still rusty from thermal water. A church with fortified walls, slit high up with paneless windows. You thought of the pungent and proximate caves of Roquefort. The altar—dressed in a cotton cloth and topped by a green-tasselled ebony credence—souvenir style. Diana paid a courtesy visit to the Holy Virgin. She lingered before the matron, who, with 1287 indulgences, looked down at the World, a home-made tart, under her bare feet. Dusk began to exude from the soil.

"Here is a prayer-book, my child, in case you have forgotten your Ave Maria."

It was a young priest, with beautiful, sugary hands, and a look of suffering and sensitiveness.

"What a wonderful church you have, Father!"

He deemed Diana indulgent, was suborned.

"Your Holy Virgin is as good-looking as Grace Miles in *For the Sake of Her Race*. But, alas, I'm such a wicked person that I don't deserve to be here. Forgive me, Father, for talking about myself. . . ."

"I am here to listen to you."

"Which accounts for the success of religion. It's so nice, you see, to give yourself a good overhauling, straighten up, drink out of the faucet, hit the hay at nine o'clock, be far away from Rue de Rennes with that depot at the end that it can't get rid of."

"You suffer?"

"Yes. It's always better."

"The meekness which graces your speech, my child, could not be feigned. A life far from the world and its pleasures will put you back on the right path. That path is arduous, as is a mountain trail, but strewn with so many flowers! Then we shall unite in prayer (I say 'we' for God leads you to me)."



"I don't intend to pester you with my tales of woe, Father," answered Diana. "But when it comes to someone as daft as I am, meditation is no good. 'Women weren't made to think,' my mother used to say; 'It brings them bad luck.' When I'm with my pals, leading such a life that you can't tell the difference between night and day, I don't behave—and I don't think. Which, afterwards, enables me to blame others preferably. Everybody around me lives like that. Anyway, I've always had the impression of having water on the brain."

The *curé* communed with himself. His lips moved. He said that he was considering a series of uninterrupted pious exercises, to be practised even without fervour.

"Eurythmics," said Diana.

The next day she sat on the rectory lawn. Her hair, already bobbed, she had cut like a man's. This lengthened her neck and dyed it blue. Touching, unsexed doll, she looked suddenly Catholic, like a Jeanne d'Arc recovering from typhoid fever.

"Taste this excellent pear. It is owing to the mild autumn with which our Lord has gratified us that it is already ripe. You will also have a glass of Châteauneuf, Châteauneuf du Pape, will you not?"

"Since it's a priestly wine," said Diana, placing a glass between her and the sun.

"It's 1908. It begins to ferment a little. It must be drunk."

"I'm happy for the first time in ages."

Diana was surrounded by a red cat, a plate of muscat, and three pears, one of them bitten.

"Your soul, like a soft feather, is wafted on the Spirit of God, Miss."

"Mrs."

She put the ribbon of her combination around the cat's neck.

"I'm animal myself. They tell me I look like a white mouse—do I? Perhaps I'm going to become a saint?"

"Woman is naturally humble, and the Kingdom of God opens often to her. Three times a day, say aloud, 'I hope.'"

"I could never screw myself up to confessing. But, like an old toper, I'm going to tell you the story of my life—that is to say, after all, of my sins. If you look incredulous, I'll invent a few extra."

Diana, however, stuck to a highly expurgated version.

"All you need to know, Father, is that I've done everything—"

When she had finished, the priest was praying.

"At least let your repentance be sincere. God wills the return of your soul. Help Him. Not all sinners respond to His advances. His infinite wisdom suffers Him to know which will help themselves and which, on the contrary, will not. God turns, in preference, to the latter."

"Just like a woman."

Diana returned to the rectory twice, but the priest was absent. As her coquetry went far, she pencilled to his address.

"You've dropped your white mouse. But won't you take her picking daisies?"

She received no answer.

It rained. The mountains became a submarine landscape. Diana felt lonesome. She did not, to be sure, pine for either the Elysée-Montmartre where you slide down the banister; or the one-legged lady on Boulevard des Capucines; or the Chinese dishes at the Pascal; or the Cabaret du Néant where, one night, they laid Thor in a coffin; or the Comédie Française, where they had been to see *La Fille de Roland*, and it was like Aunt Emma's parlour. . . . She had a mind to send Mad a card. She gave her address under seal of secrecy. Then she regretted her weakness, and, to do penance, she climbed the stairs from the post-office to the church, stopping at each step to recite an angelic salutation, in imitation of Saint Catherine of Sienna.

The church was more than ever a bath. The walls oozed, water squirted from the broken gargoyles—the altar, adorned with faded paper flowers, rotted away in bitterness. Never would God, who goes barefooted, choose such a place to appear as the sun or on a golden throne. Back there, it would soon be the hour when Paris blazes forth, rouses municipal stars—rose or white—streams of luminous water, transforms the rain into an unbelievable revel, doubles its lighting system free of charge. "*Une nuit enflammée*," to talk like Bérénice. Women, flitting along early winter evenings, noses in furs taken out of pepper that morning, which makes them sneeze. Diana was left alone with all this austerity. Solitude oppressed her eyelids.

"Tears add fuel to the flame of charity," said the priest. "Can it be that you already feel flooded by an inner light?"

"Oh, not at all! In this burg, I congeal where I'm soft, and when I'm hard I liquefy."

She added, to make him feel bad:

"Something tells me to kill myself, that it's the Will of God."

"It is the work of the Demon," said the priest. "But I am confident. The Lord appeared to me this night in the guise of a child."

"You have to be careful about what you dream nowadays, you know."

She expatiated:

"When I'm asleep, I hear and even read music. And yet I don't even know my scales."

"Saint Herman of Steinfeld composed his hymn to Saint Ursula without knowing music," objected the priest.

"With a name like that and so talented, he must have been a Jew."

But life was odious, no matter how you took it. She loathed the sight of the priest, with his over-long hair, his stagy face, his unctuousness—to dissimulate his fear of her. Why, instead of treating her harshly, was he always ready to shun her glance, to reel off edifying twaddle? And the country—a thing absolutely useless during ten months of the year. She was a member of that Parisian tribe which takes wheat for rye. All that space gone to waste. Never anything to do. Life is spent for leisure, and when one has it, in regretting it.

Diana went back to the Hôtel de la Poste and took to her bed. There she spent thirty-six hours, stripping off the wall-paper and weeping. Then, as beautiful weather had returned, she went out and sat down in front of the so-to-speak townhall.

The plain, raked by the wintry wind, shook its still more beseeching olive trees, wrinkled an already aged Rhône; far off, one desecrated Fort Saint-André and its rose Tavel bottle turrets. Then the Arles plain to the Cévennes. . . .

"So that's the way you go to the wash-room?"

In a rubber bag, beneath a crust of mud, it was Thor, come by motor-bike.

He grabbed her by the hair.

"Don't touch me," Diana told him; "I've been introduced to God."

## THE LAST WORD

BY JAMES STEPHENS

The leaf will wrinkle to decay  
And crumble into dust away:  
The rose, the lily, grow to eld  
And are, and are no more, beheld;  
Naught can be stayed, for, as the eye  
Rests upon an object nigh  
It is not there to look upon;  
It is mysteriously gone;  
And, in its place, another thing  
Apes its shape and fashioning.

Whate'er the sun can breath to-day  
The moon can lip it all away  
To-night, and all will rebegin  
To-morrow as the dawn comes in:  
Is no beginning, middle-trend,  
Or argument to that, or end:  
No cause and no effect, and no  
Reason why it should be so;  
Or why it might be otherwise  
To other minds, or other eyes.

The soul can dream itself to be  
Adrift upon an endless sea  
Of day and night: the soul can seem  
To be all things that it can dream;  
And needs but look within to find  
That which is steady in the wind;  
That which the fire does not appal;  
Which good and ill move not at all;  
Which does not seek, or lack, or try,  
And was not born, and cannot die.

It has been writ in wisdom old—  
This is the last word to be told:  
There is no dissolution, no  
Creation: there are none in woe:  
There is no teacher, teaching, taught:  
Are none who long for, lack for aught:  
Are none who pine for freedom, none  
Are liberated under sun;  
And this is absolutely true—  
In Him who dreams in me and you.

## A MONUMENT TO PROUST

BY MALCOLM COWLEY

CENTURIES never begin or end at the proper date: the seventeenth died in 1715 and the eighteenth prematurely in 1789; what we call the nineteenth century extends from 1815 to 1914 and is the century of Marcel Proust. No other novelist has described its latter years more faithfully. He makes no mention of battles, political campaigns, world exhibitions, visits of crowned heads; but in their place and with a better sense of relative values he records those small and actual changes in private life to which the changing century gave birth. The invention, not of electricity, but electric parlour lamps, not of automobiles, but taximeters. Anti-Semitism spreading after the Dreyfus affair. Fashion: skirts which expand or deflate, changing mannerisms of speech, palms in their Chinese *jardinières* carried from drawing-rooms to make place for the severity of gilt and lacquer. Out of such details he builds a civilization which differs minutely and essentially from that of 1920 or that of 1875, and which alters imperceptibly from year to year. *Remembrance of Things Past* is, accurately, a historical novel.

At the same time it could be classed as autobiography: it is the story of a hero who, in most respects, is Proust himself; who spends his youth in a provincial city and his manhood in Paris; who is received in society; who does little, in general, but observe a life in which he is too sickly to participate. *Remembrance of Things Past* has also been called "a laboratory of morals," "the story of the rise of a family." It is a comedy of manners as elegant and artificial as Congreve, and it is a Shakespearian tragedy expanded hugely: embracing all of these categories it is limited by none. Incidentally it is the longest novel of modern times.

Its every dimension, every member is brobdingnagian. Paragraphs extend over several pages; a sentence contains three hundred words and a single chapter eighty thousand; the completed whole, with its million words at the least, is divided into eight books each of which would make an exceptionally long novel in itself and yet which retains the air of something as episodic, fragmentary as a



thousand years in face of eternity. *Du Côté de Chez Swann* (Swann's Way) *A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleur*, *Le Côté des Guermantes* (I and II) *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (I, II, and III) *Le Temps Retrouvé*: from 1880 till the war, from book to book and decade to decade the novel marches on, endlessly.

Its publication in France, still uncompleted, has extended already through nine years, but the American version should appear more rapidly. The task of the translator, although long and responsible, is none too difficult. Proust writes a prose which is less French than international; it can be rendered into English phrase by phrase, almost word for word; approximately that is what Mr Moncrieff has done. Except for a few pages of conversation translated uncolloquially, except for a dozen obscure phrases which he misunderstood, his version of *Swann's Way* gives the same effect as the original. If he only does as well on the seven huge books which follow. . . .

In spite of the hugeness of *Remembrance of Things Past* there is something modest about the conception of it when compared with many shorter novels. It is no attempt to anatomize genius, like *Jean-Christophe*; no *Odyssey of Modern Times*. Neither is it France, or *Three Decades of the Nineteenth Century*; in spite of its historical value it does not even claim to be France During *Three Decades of the Nineteenth Century*. Simply, it is what one man remembers: the history of one man against a limited social background. Everything is modest except the length, and the length is responsible for its greatest imperfection.

*Remembrance of Things Past* lacks unity. Once I wrote: It is not a work of art, but a gallery in which the separate portraits are works of art. The judgement was true and unjust, for the gallery itself is savantly arranged.

*Swann's Way* is an introduction, a sort of catalogue to the portraits exhibited by Marcel Proust. In the first of its three immense chapters he recalls his childhood, skipping from subject to subject in a fashion as capricious as memory itself and thus, inconsequentially, presenting situations which he will touch only lightly at first and then leave hanging in suspense, like broken chords, till the distant end of the novel. The second chapter approaches the story from an entirely different angle. It is the history of a love-affair of

Charles Swann, an affair which began and ended before Proust or Proust's hero was born, but which had unending consequences: Swann is a sort of foreshadow of the hero, and his adventure a brief parallel, a synopsis of the whole novel. The device is masterly. In the third chapter Proust begins the orderly recital of his memories; they will march through the seven books which follow, while, one after another, the chords which he had sounded tentatively in Swann's Way will be resolved. If the plan is excellent the author is not always faithful to his plan; he forgets it, making excursions into strange territory; the reader more fatally forgets and may even write in his note-book: Remembrance of Things Past is not a work of art, but a gallery in which . . .

The painter and his subjects change continually. Every seven or ten years a man undergoes such complete alteration that he might as well be a different person. This is at least true of men of exceptional intelligence, a quality which no one could deny either to the purring social lion of Sodom and Gomorrha or to the little, little boy of Swann's Way, the boy who lay awake all night when his mother forgot to kiss him. They have intelligence and a name in common, but nothing else: there is not a hair, not a molecule of the finger-nail that is the same. And if Proust as hero has changed, Proust as author has altered more dangerously; he becomes, in his later volumes, drier, wittier, more brittle than before; he describes events which he saw accurately, heard brilliantly, but did not, as in Swann's Way, touch, smell, taste. That first volume alone makes an appeal to the senses which are inarticulate and fundamental; it goes deeper than reason; it has magic.

It has the magic of things created: a brand-new world with smells and tastes of its own and ditches where you can make authentic mud pies. In that world is a city, newly created and aged as if by some chemical process; a city with complete households of servants and masters, crooked definite streets, a church which overshadows them; and there is evil and pity and pain. You might almost take it for a city of the world you know already, but its objects are brighter and more definite, existing under the white sun of logic.

Proust has created an aristocratic society which is vastly more interesting than any which could exist. He has created a great painter, an ambassador, a homosexual baron, actresses of two gen-

erations, a great philosopher. We believe in them as types because they are individuals. But chiefly we believe in Swann, Charles Swann, Jew and bourgeois, friend of the Duchesse de Guermantes and the Prince of Wales, rejected lover of Odette. He, the arbiter of elegances, followed her to gambling houses or questionable balls; he waited outside till a friend appeared to carry her a note; he waited; there was no answer; the gas-light flickered; guests passed more and more rarely into the unapproachable and infernal hall. He waited and expected nothing, consoling himself with the thought that pity and love and knowledge had entered his life again: with his knowledge and his pain and the new belief they gave him in the importance of all life, his life, he bore some resemblance to a first reader of Marcel Proust.

The "secret" of Proust is simply that he uses his five senses not as mere recording instruments, but as servants to his intelligence. It is hardly an illuminating secret. However, this directing intelligence of his (one is forced to mention it so often) has its own modes of operating which go a longer way towards explaining the qualities of his work.

Proust is an analyst: not as Descartes or the Schoolmen were analysts; not in any philosophical or mathematical sense, but in the scientific; his novel is a sort of analytic organic chemistry. He decomposes living things—a smile, a career, a reception—into their constituent elements so as to define them more clearly.

When we speak of analysis in connexion with a novel we think of something dead: "holding an autopsy over an idea," "analysing the guts out of it." The effect of Proust's method is entirely different; he makes things live. He describes, for example, a great actress in the rôle of Phèdre, analysing not so much her manner of interpretation as the effect which personally he received from it. He decomposes his emotion into its most minute details, and at a certain point one of these minutiae, a detail which corresponds with the reader's own experience, allows him to enter the procession of Proust's ideas, to partake of them, to re-create the whole living emotion in himself. Proust's method, described in two words, is a creative analysis.

You cannot analyse a river, but you may analyse a bucket of water drawn from the river. Proust extracts from his subject, which

is the stream of personal consciousness, a series of situations which exist like separate bucketfuls of water; no two of them are quite alike; he analyses each of them in turn and in this manner creates a simulacrum of his stream of consciousness. This time it is not really a stream. The situations do not move; it is only by the superposition of one situation on another that he gives the illusion of motion, as in a reel of films. He says, in conscious vindication of his method:

"What we suppose to be our love, our jealousy are, neither of them, single, continuous and indivisible passions. They are composed of an infinity of successive loves, of different jealousies, each of which is ephemeral, although by their uninterrupted multitude they give us the impression of continuity, the illusion of unity."

Proust will decompose a love-affair into these little and successive loves, these ephemeral jealousies, and analyse each of them in turn. Charles Swann loves a woman of the half-world: that is the subject of the famous second chapter of *Swann's Way*. This main situation is decomposed into ten. Thus, Swann meets a circle of new friends—falls in love—attains his love—adjusts his life thereto—visits the Verdurin circle a second time to meet a rival—becomes jealous. . . . One situation follows another; each is brilliantly analysed into a multitude of minor situations which are defined in turn; however, between one situation and the next there is an hiatus which, without being noticeable at first, becomes glaringly evident on a second reading.

Situations do not really succeed each other for Marcel Proust; there is a causal, but no temporal connexion between them. Past and present, anterior and posterior, exist for him simultaneously as in the omniscient mind of the Deity imagined by St Thomas Aquinas.

This peculiar sort of vision which was Proust's; this decomposition of life into an infinity of situations which exist simultaneously, is the commentary and explanation of his style. He sees everything at once. Therefore he tries to pack as much as possible into every single sentence: explaining, qualifying, expanding, piling adjective on adjective and clause on clause till the receptacle overflows. His sentences are paragraphs and his paragraphs chapters; however, it

is not the paragraph, not the chapter even, but the situation which is the real unit of his work.

He is apt to define his situations at incredible length: he analyses a kiss on the cheek in ten thousand words and spends most of a long volume on a dinner party. Apparently he is prodigal of words, but he wastes none of them. Two households with their miniature civilizations meet and mingle in the kiss, and the dinner is not so much a page from the history of French society as that very history.

Sometimes a description by Proust reminds me of one of those abnormally long stage directions in which Shaw analyses the elements which will create or influence his drama. Proust makes similar notations on the furniture, gives a brief history of the characters, catalogues their mannerisms; however, he extends these observations to limits beyond Shaw's ambition. At their conclusion the stage is set for anything that may occur: murder, theft, bigamy, we are prepared to taste the fine and particular flavour of any event. There is none; at least our senses, blunted with melodrama, can realize no event. But events are something else to Proust: a smile is an event; so is a careless lie, a comprehension, a slight change in attitude whose consequences develop indefinitely into new situations which are analysed in turn, decomposed into others . . . and so the book expands to seemingly all the breadth of life.

The nineteenth is Proust's century: all the congregation of his friends and imitators cannot advance him into the twentieth, nor can his personal admiration for Saint-Simon carry him backwards to a seventeenth century which he imagines, perhaps, to be more congenial. He is not a contemporary of Racine, still less of Apollinaire or Louis Aragon; his age is the one which produced Symbolist poets, Henry James, Debussy. He has translated Ruskin into French; he studied and imitated Meredith; he can be dated. In France, where literary generations succeed each other almost decennially, he belongs not even to the last generation, but to the one which preceded it. He developed the ideals of that generation so unexpectedly and to such depth that he became independent, in a sense, of time; however, if any age can claim him it is certainly not ours.

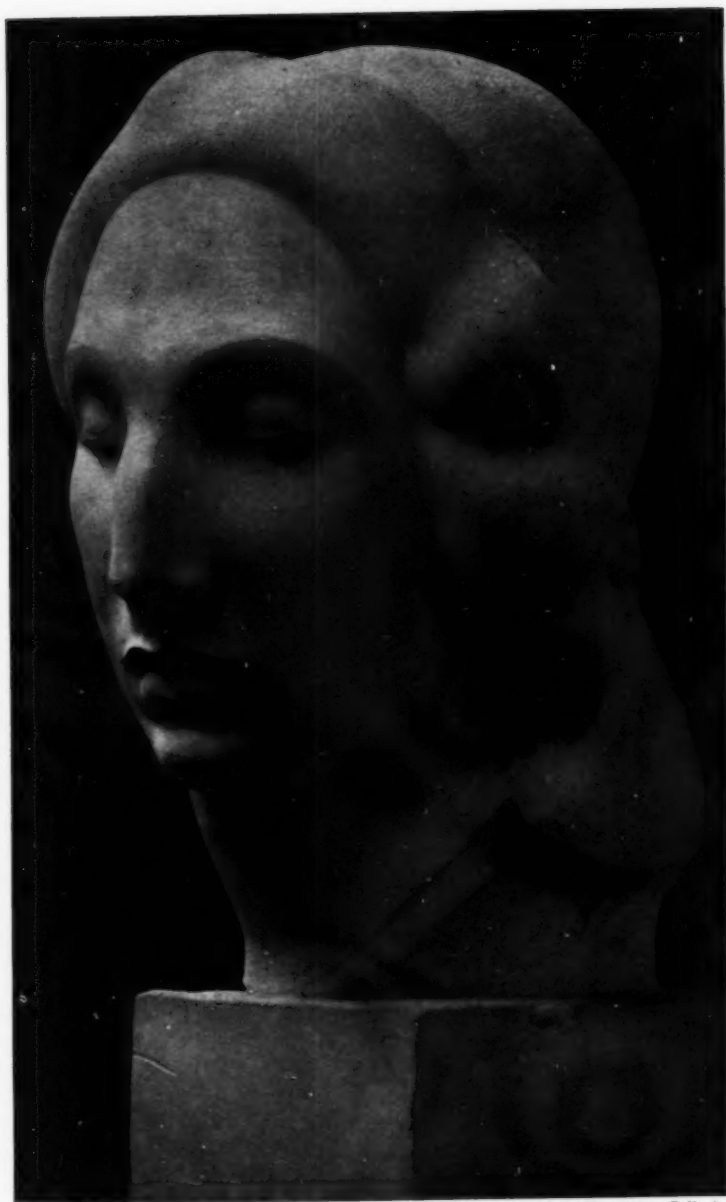
Observe the life of Proust, so different from the ideal of contemporary writers. He spent most of it in bed, in an interior room

hermetically sealed to prevent drafts; they say he could feel a breath of air three rooms away, and it would set him coughing. He rarely saw the daylight. His work-room was lined with cork to deaden every noise. Flowers brought on his asthma and were prohibited; women equally, whom he only saw of an evening when he emerged, in correct evening clothes, to attend a reception in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Hatred for natural objects; fastidious ill health; attraction for everything artificial: his life was the sort which might have been imagined by Huysmans or in the *Yellow Book*. At least it possessed the forgotten virtue of leisure, a leisure which he used to develop his uncontemporary and unique sensibility.

He came to enter so completely into the minds of his friends that before they visited the almost invariable sick-bed of his later years, even before the visit was planned, he knew its hour and its day; to him the tinkling bell which announced a caller was only a confirmation of something he had projected a long time before. They say he greeted death as a sort of importunate and expected guest. Some months ago he was already saying: I have only so much or so much time to live; can I finish it? A few days before he died his novel was finished, as nearly finished as such a work can ever be; it lacked a final adornment, but the great fleshed skeleton was complete. He asked afterwards that all its eight books be brought to him. "Find the passages where I have spoken about death. It seems to me that I should know it better now. I want to rewrite the death of Bergotte." His own death was only a process of externalization; he had turned himself inside out like an orange and sucked it dry, or inscribed himself on a monument; his observation, his sensibility, his affectations, everything about him that was weak or strong had passed into the created characters of his novel.



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*Courtesy of the Kraushaar Galleries*

WOMAN'S HEAD. BY GASTON LACHAISE



## CARCHESTER

BY B. M. G. ADAMS

"**S**HOULD advise you to lay in a stock of these hairpins whilst we hold them, Madam? Our manufacturers are no longer able to supply, as they are executing government barbed wire contracts."—Richardson coming off duty in the V. A. D. hospital, powdering her pallid face in front of the stained deal dressing-table in the cloak-room, and after giving details of a heavy night owing to Sergeant Dalton's final collapse from haemorrhage, admitting that the only thing about the prolongation of the fighting really worrying her was a Daily Mail paragraph. Owing to rice starch contained in it, further manufacture of face powder had been forbidden. Going home the morning before she had bought fourteen boxes of varying shades and qualities. "That and tea will see me through the rest of the war. I never was a heavy eater," she remarked, examining a spot on her chin critically in front of the mottled glass.

In the kitchens, voluntary workers with their rationing books left in handbags in the cloak-room, obtained a comforting illusion of plenty from the handling of hospital supplies. Slabs of bleeding liver, rabbits, reddish purple, sacks of winter vegetables, blocks of margarine. The special diet sheet presented difficulties. Also the men would not touch "made-up" food. Four blue-suited convalescents came in after the doctor's round, and peeled potatoes into buckets. At half-past ten the kitchen staff drank strong brewed tea from enamel mugs, and ate hunches of bread spread with dripping. In the mornings, there was no time to toast it. Girls, with sleeves rolled above their floured forearms, giggled, pulled snapshots of the patients from their apron pockets, and showed them to one another whilst Mrs Barton, the head cook, spoke at the telephone. The most approachable ones had small woollen golliwogs, manufactured by men in the wards above, pinned to their white starched bibs.

A loose-mouthed charwoman, with untidy hair and a soft unwieldy body, made excuses to enter the kitchen two or three times

whilst the men were there, chaffing and laughing loudly with them each time she did so. The other workers who, whatever step in the social scale they were drawn from, all considered themselves her superior, resented this, but were frigidly civil, for fear she would pretend that she had not the time to wash up kitchen implements required in a hurry. She drank her tea and ate her bread and dripping over the scullery sink, amid piles of dishes washed and unwashed, while the two-year-old child she was still nursing played with grimed potatoes and turnips on the floor. Her husband was in France; in addition to the weekly grant from his pay, she got good money for her work at the hospital, and was living with a lance corporal from the infantry barracks. She was one of many who would regret the end of the war.

Lodging-house keepers in Carchester got their share of loot from the collapse of civilization. Every room, good, bad, and indifferent, could have been let half a dozen times over to distracted temporary officers, who trudged the city for hours, carrying their kit-bags, unable to find accommodation. They were over-charged, their government rations filched, hot water allowanced as though on active service. Complaints were met by the reply that if not satisfied they could go—the room could be let again before night—that the landlady herself objected to taking lodgers, but felt that she was “doing her bit” by wearing out herself and her furniture, in making a home for military gentlemen.

The “temps” in many cases brought wives who had provided themselves with copies of *Manners and Rules of Good Society* so as not to be at a disadvantage in the new social sphere in which they hoped to find themselves. The lady of a quite efficient middle-aged subaltern who had been a traveller for *Warder’s Whisky*, sat in her lodgings from two till six, every afternoon throughout July and August, “in case any one called.” When the major’s wife under orders from her husband eventually did so, she with difficulty prevented herself from replying, “Damn’d damp,” to her hostess’s remark, “Mr Kendal and myself consider the climate of Carchester excessively humid. Do not you?” The social leavening that the ferment of the war should have produced, failed as did every other thing promised from it.

The monotony of the fourth year of war exhausted all emotions capable of being played upon by government posters and news-

paper specials; preoccupation with the scarcity of necessities super-vened. Lady Darley, in chinchilla wrap and suède gloves, stated that she—was tired—she was going home to lie down until lunch. She had been standing more than an hour in the sugar queue at Alden's. Farmer's demanded eight and six apiece for young rabbits in the market, and took them home again to give to their dogs, rather than sell them for less. Alden the grocer's was mobbed by a dingy crowd of customers from the Co-operative Stores, whose reserve stocks had run low; and whose entire plate-glass front given up to an exposition of tins of salmon and wreaths of immortelles under glass cases, evinced either a morbid humour or unfortunate association of ideas, on the part of the window dresser.

The seal-like red-faced proprietor at the Black Stag Hotel welcomed clients with an unpleasing familiarity heightened by whisky; here good meals were still obtainable at heavy prices, often without production of ration tickets. No other hotel keeper in the city risked such a pre-war display of dressed meats on his side table. Members of the local food-committee lunched there every day. Hospitality in private houses became an ordeal for entertainer and entertained when the poster "Eat less bread" was displayed in every dining-room, and a request was made that the guest's cutlet bone should be placed on a dish provided for that purpose, so that it might be further utilized by the household.

A difference in popular spirit. White-bearded old gentlemen in bath chairs no longer tore off their hats to wave them at khaki platoons marching off to billet. The substitution of the word "Windsor" for "Guelph" by the king, in the royal family tree, and the conversion of certain of his less important relatives from Anglo-German princelings to English aristocrats, awoke little national enthusiasm; though it was still possible to arouse irritation in an English railway carriage or drawing-room by remarking that George and his sons were praiseworthy examples of what could be done with full-blooded Germans after two or three generations of British training. To Carchester, war was no longer represented by tattered banners hanging in the half lights of its cathedral, but by emptying shop windows and over-flowing hospitals. Hysteria amongst the women had reached its height when elderly Miss Jackson, a regular visitor at the Military Hospital, begged to be allowed to enter the mortuary so that she might kiss the bodies of

three New Zealand soldiers she had never seen, "for their mothers' sake."

In travelling theatrical companies, boys of fifteen played juvenile lead to flamboyant leading ladies, whilst elderly gentlemen, scraggy and obese, some moving rheumatically and with cotton wool in their ears, swung canes and raised top hats in a dandy chorus. Something had to be done to liven up things for men on leave. There were prostitutes in plenty, schoolgirls with painted faces, middle-aged, respectable looking women whose husbands were on active service hanging round the barrack gates all day, and making the pavements of Church Walk impassable after dusk. In the Maternity Hospital a ward had been set apart for unmarried mothers. From time to time a child made its arrival there, whose skin had the appearance of half melted pink wax. The nurses disinfected their hands before and after touching it. Meetings were held in private houses at which rescue workers and clergy fought as to the desirability of forming proper organizations for helping young women to avoid the heaviest penalty of their sin. Commanding and medical officers raged against a pure-minded government which refused to allow the military authorities to interfere with women who were known to be contaminating batch after batch of newly joined recruits. At Sergeant Thompson's funeral, the chaplain addressed the mourners with diffidence, in spite of military lustre lent by the union jack wrapped round the coffin on the gun carriage, and the firing party under command of a subaltern with his tongue in his cheek.

Yet optimism existed. A halfpenny daily paper running a serial love story and economical cookery recipes, stated that it was winning the war for England. The feet of hundreds in Carchester moved to one-steps and fox-trots night after night. As Reginald Davis, rich elderly bachelor, owner of the steel works said, "One must make the best of the show. There's old Lawson Green, who's lost his two boys, down in the mouth, depressing other people, taking no interest in anything. As for me, I've never been in better health in my life, have made many pleasant acquaintances I should not have met except for the war, and we've extended the works—"



## SAINT-EVREMOND

BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

**S**SAINT-EVREMOND'S great gift is charm, the charm of an exquisite and amiable and rather *malin* personality. The slightest as well as the most serious of his writings possesses this cordial and fragrant charm. As we yield to this charm, smile at its pure and ever-present wit, applaud the common sense kept so light by good breeding, the antithesis of an elaborately simple prose, we understand why Saint-Evremond was so welcome a guest at Whitehall, why he delighted Buckingham and Waller with his conversation, why he remained always an affectionate memory to Ninon. It is to be apprehended that this charm is hardly appreciated by the readers to-day as it was enjoyed by the best wits of the Court of Charles II. Mr Whibley, of course, knows and appreciates Saint-Evremond; Mr Frederic Manning has recently retold some of the well-known passages of his life; but in that Caledonian Market of literature, the Charing Cross-road, the works of Saint-Evremond are a drug. We have moved singularly far from Saint-Evremond's own conception of the intellectual life:

*"Je ne trouve point de Sciences qui touchent particulièrement les honnêtes gens, que la Morale, la Politique, et la connoissance des Belles-Lettres.*

*La première regarde la Raison, la seconde la Société, la troisième la Conversation. L'une vous apprend à gouverner vos passions; par l'autre, vous vous instruisez des Affaires de l'Etat, et réglez votre conduite dans la Fortune: la dernière polit l'Esprit, inspire la délicatesse et l'agrément."*

In life Saint-Evremond aimed at being the *honnête homme*; in literature he was the accomplished "amateur," an amateur who had the ability of the master, whose taste regulated the genius of Racine, whose approval delighted and consoled Corneille in his old age; a master of prose who shunned the promiscuity of publication and only on his death-bed arranged his writings and indicated

which of the pirated pieces attributed to him were really his. If there is a vanity of a coquettish kind here, the wilfully assumed indifference of the *grand seigneur*, there is none of the petty vanity of authorship, no thrusting of his personality upon the world through the refined medium of advertisement.

There are no Saint-Evremonds now; the examples are extinct, the mould is broken; we have sold "cheap what was most dear." In England only perhaps some remnant of the tradition of *honnêtes gens* still remains, but how precariously! It would be ignorant or blind to deny that we still produce excellent books, that we still possess a literary life and a literary "movement" of interest and importance; but we have lost the tone, the temper, the charm which were so eminently characteristic of Saint-Evremond and of the society he represented. Our most conscientious authors write for themselves and for other authors; if they venture beyond these purely professional audiences, they find a huge, inchoate public, not to be despised indeed, but lacking the authority of a society of *honnêtes gens* to correct gently their faults, to console them by just appreciation. When Lord Clarendon tells us of the friends of his youth, in that series of incomparable portraits which occupy the early pages of *The Life*, he distinguishes between the professional authors like Ben Jonson and Selden, and the "Men of more than ordinary Eminence" like Lord Falkland, Waller, and Chillingworth. The distinction is perhaps a little arbitrary (Sir Kenelm Digby is among the first) but it is sensible. And it is perhaps no great straining of truth to say that Waller's influence on our poetry (something of a puzzle, if one looks only at his mediocre work) was due less to his practice as a poet than to his authority as a refined judge.

This critical function of the *honnêtes gens*, so important in the history of the seventeenth-century literature, and so often overlooked, is well appreciated by Mr Maurice Wilmotte in his introduction to the selected critical writings of Saint-Evremond. One may say that he pitched upon the criticism of Saint-Evremond—not the most important or delightful of his writings—to form his volume because he wished to bring out this aspect of society then. Naturally his arguments and examples are drawn from France; but the same thing happened in England. We all know how the Elizabethan and Jacobean courtier worried and partly directed the stage

by his importunate presence among the actors themselves. And so in France:

*"Il avait des juges, cela va de soi, mais ils étaient ailleurs que dans ces stalles d'orchestre où l'on prétend décider maintenant du sort d'une comédie. Ils étaient assis sur le 'plateau', et c'est là, dans un contact infiniment plus proche (et parfois gênant) avec les acteurs, qu'ils écoutaient et échangeaient à demi-voix les premières impressions. Ces impressions, ils les communiquaient aux gens de leur monde, au sortir de la représentation (ainsi fait le marquis dans la Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes) et peu à peu une opinion se formait, qui donnait le ton à la cour d'abord, à la ville ensuite."*

Similarly the opinion of the two banished critics, Bussy Rabutin and Saint-Evremond, was eagerly sought by correspondents, widely spread and commented on, and had an effect we can scarcely realize to-day.

All this may seem a rather solemn preamble to a few occasional pieces from the pen of a minor author, but we have only to compare the "humaner" criticisms of Saint-Evremond with the slightly pedantic "rules" promulgated by Father Bouhours to recognize that the former still belong to the category of universal literature, while the latter concern only the literary student. Saint-Evremond's criticism, so charmingly persuasive ("urbane" Arnold would have called it) is purely the criticism of aristocratic good sense, strictly limited, unimaginative, "correct." It makes no discoveries, has no *flair*; it refines upon a few principles, restricts itself to a few authors. Saint-Evremond's culture was purely Latin. He read and re-read the Latin poets; but, so strong is his prejudice against what is romantic, imaginative, fabulous, and "irregular," that he preferred Lucan to Virgil. He delighted in Cicero's letters, and had a *tendre* for Atticus, "the *honnête homme* of antiquity," as he calls him somewhere. He knew Spanish and delighted in "the Homer of comedy," Cervantes. His Italian was not good enough for him to appreciate the niceties of its poetry (he knows nothing of Dante) but he had a great admiration for Machiavelli, whom he imitated. His preferences in French literature went to Montaigne, Malherbe, Corneille, and Voiture. He read Bossuet and Racine with admiration; he mentions Théophile and Saint-

Amant. He knew Epicurus through Gassendi and Bernier; Descartes he knew and had conversed with. But he knew no Greek and little English. The great literatures of the imagination were closed to him.

His remarks on the English drama are omitted by M Wilmotte as of "slight interest"; to us they are extremely interesting as showing the taste of English society at the time, for Saint-Evremond knew nothing of English literature except what he was told by his English friends. He cites with approval Bacon, Ben Jonson, Hobbes, Waller, and Shadwell. But he says nothing of Shakespeare, nothing of Dryden. "There are," he says, "a few old English tragedies, which would be good if they were altered," "*en tous les autres de ces temps là, vous ne voyez qu'une matière informe et mal digérée.*" So that is what Mr Waller and my lords Montagu and Buckingham, St Albans and Arlington, Crofts and d'Aubigny thought of Macbeth and King Lear and Coriolanus! Did not Mr Waller himself "improve" an old play called The Maid's Tragedy in accordance with the dictates of reason and loyalty? Among our comedies Saint-Evremond praised Bartholomew Fair and Epsom Wells and he produced a sort of pastiche of The Fox under the title of Sir Politic Would-be. Whereupon Dryden, smarting under the slight to himself, even more than that to Shakespeare, wrote:

"His examination of the Grand Alexandre, in my opinion, is an admirable piece of criticism; and I doubt not but that his observations on the English theatre had been as absolute in their kind, had he seen with his own eyes and not with those of other men. But conversing in a manner wholly with the Court, which is not always the truest judge, he has unavoidably been led into mistakes, and given to some of our coarsest poets<sup>1</sup> a reputation abroad, which they never had at home. Had his conversation in the town been more general, he had certainly received other ideas on that subject; and not transmitted those names into his own country, which will be forgotten by Posterity in ours."

That is the other side of the question; but even these deficiencies in taste do not invalidate the importance of the audience of *honnêtes gens* in forming and keeping a standard of good taste. Their in-

<sup>1</sup> Meaning Shadwell, of course.

fluence in France was generally good; in England, after the Restoration, they were too Frenchified by their foreign education to be sensible of the immense value of our imaginative literature. In their criticism of English literature of intelligence they were doubtless right—at least, we have Arnold's authority for so believing.

But criticism is only a part of Saint-Evremond's literary activity. He wrote two comedies, some excellent "conversations" or dialogues, many delightful letters, numbers of essays, moral and philosophical, and quantities of verse. He wrote a political study, the discovery of which during the trial of Fouquet caused his exile. Above all he excelled in "polite conversation." In his younger days he had a knack of fine satire (witness the famous conversation of the Maréchal d'Hoquincourt and le Père Canaye) which for delicacy and point reminds one of no less a genius than M France. Indeed, it makes us regret that Saint-Evremond wasted so much of his time and verve on trifles. Had the novel been as respectable a form then as two centuries later, had Saint-Evremond been a little less indolent, what a novel he might have left us, with his fine gift of style, his skill in dialogue, his penetration in reading character and his ability to record it! He persisted in regarding himself merely as a cultivated gentleman whose pleasure it was to appreciate great writers and to "polish his wit" by contact with their works; and we are forced to acquiesce, though with immense regret, in his aristocratic prejudice. Was there ever a case of greater literary nonchalance than his refusal to re-write the chapters of his most ambitious work, the *Réflexions sur les Divers Génies du Peuple Romain*, after Waller had lost them in the confusion of the Plague and the Fire? And how lacking in curiosity this *bon esprit* was! There in the first years of his exile was the old London of the Tudors and Stuarts, with its bridge of houses, its streets of timbered shops, its extraordinary moving crowds, its multitudinous sects and characters; and he says not a word of it. There later was Shakespeare being played and widely read; Milton publishing *Paradise Lost*; and Dryden engaged in his combats with dullards; and he missed it all. Certainly rather a high price to pay for an impeccability of *tenue* and an Epicurean tranquillity.

Among all the Epicureans of various shades of opinion produced by Gassendi, Saint-Evremond is perhaps the most delicate, the most genuine, and the most attractive in his character and philosophy.

In one essay he divides men into "*sensuels, voluptueux, et délicats*"; he was himself a *délicat*, remote indeed from the gross orgies of the *goinfres*, but equally repelled by what was austere, restricted, and humble in Epicureanism. He is always protesting against the ungodly habit of vegetarianism, and he points out with cogency and wit that the austere habits attributed to Epicurus well became an elderly invalid of small fortune, but are not to be desired at another period of life or in good health. His Epicureanism was a kind of prudent refinement, never allowing the pleasure of to-day to spoil the pleasure to come to-morrow; the best of everything, but too much of nothing.

## ADMONITION IN AUTUMN

BY ANTHONY WRYNN

You tall hound hurrying across the floor of the forest,  
To whom movement is stillness, whose heart  
Shakes with the stir in the rocks, what fur of gold,  
What dull glint of blood at the motionless mouth

Inspires your harsh call of pride and death  
When the mystery lies curled in the nettles?  
There is the answering horn through the wicker halls!  
The horn of the twitching fur and the cry

And your quelling teeth. A piece of lightning may lie, then,  
In your imperceptible iris from exaltation  
Higher than the exaltation of stillness,  
And, true, we see but impetuous sense, the blue gloss

And the paw, the flat ear, but November  
Has gales of laughter when the sun stops.  
You tall hound, watch the dark coverts when you wander,  
Your jaw exhausted and cold, the hunters in bed.



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LE CHEVAL DE BOIS. BY FRANS MASEREEL.





LE VOYAGEUR. BY FRANS MASEREEL





L'INGÉNIEUR. BY FRANS MASEREEL







LE BOXEUR. BY FRANS MASEREEL

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## TAOS

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

THE Indians say Taos is the heart of the world. Their world, maybe. Some places seem temporary on the face of the earth: San Francisco for example. Some places seem final. They have a true nodality. I never felt that so powerfully as, years ago, in London. The intense powerful nodality of that great heart of the world. And during the war that heart, for me, broke. So it is. Places can lose their living nodality. Rome, to me, has lost hers. In Venice one feels the magic of the glamorous old node that once united East and West, but it is the beauty of an afterlife.

Taos pueblo still retains its old nodality. Not like a great city. But, in its way, like one of the monasteries of Europe. You cannot come upon the ruins of the old great monasteries of England, beside their waters, in some lovely valley, now remote, without feeling that here is one of the choice spots of the earth, where the spirit dwelt. To me it is so important to remember that when Rome collapsed, when the great Roman Empire fell into smoking ruins, and bears roamed in the streets of Lyons, and wolves howled in the deserted streets of Rome, and Europe really was a dark ruin, then, it was not in castles or manors or cottages that life remained vivid. Then those whose souls were still alive withdrew together and gradually built monasteries, and these monasteries and convents, little communities of quiet labour and courage, isolated, helpless, and yet never overcome in a world flooded with devastation, these alone kept the human spirit from disintegration, from going quite dark, in the Dark Ages. These men made the Church, which again made Europe, inspiring the martial faith of the Middle Ages.

Taos pueblo affects me rather like one of the old monasteries. When you get there you feel something final. There is an arrival. The nodality still holds good.

But this is the pueblo. And from the north side to the south side, from the south side to the north side, the perpetual silent wandering intentness of a full-skirted, black-shawled, long-fringed woman

in her wide white deerskin boots, the running of children, the silent sauntering of dark-faced men, bare-headed, the two plaits in front of their thin shoulders, and a white sheet like a sash swathed round their loins. They must have something to swathe themselves in.

And if it were sunset, the men swathing themselves in their sheets like shrouds, leaving only the black place of the eyes visible. And women, darker than ever, with shawls over their heads, busy at the ovens. And cattle being driven to sheds. And men and boys trotting in from the fields, on ponies. And as the night is dark, on one of the roofs, or more often on the bridge, the inevitable drum-drum-drum of the tom-tom, and young men in the dark lifting their voices to the song, like wolves or coyotes crying in music.

There it is then, the pueblo, as it has been since heaven knows when. And the slow dark weaving of the Indian life going on still, though perhaps more waveringly. And oneself, sitting there on a pony, a far-off stranger with gulfs of time between me and this. And yet, the old nodality of the pueblo still holding, like a dark ganglion spinning invisible threads of consciousness. A sense of dryness, almost of weariness, about the pueblo. And a sense of the inalterable. It brings a sick sort of feeling over me, always, to get into the Indian vibration. Like breathing chlorine.

The next day in the morning we went to help erect the great stripped may-pole. It was the straight, smoothed yellow trunk of a big tree. Of course one of the white boys took the bossing of the show. But the Indians were none too ready to obey, and their own fat dark-faced boss gave counter-orders. It was the old, amusing contradiction between the white and the dark races. As for me, I just gave a hand steadying the pole as it went up, outsider at both ends of the game.

An American girl came with a camera, and got a snap of us all struggling in the morning light with the great yellow trunk. One of the Indians went to her abruptly, in his quiet, insidious way.

"You give me that kodak. You ain't allowed take no snaps here. You pay fine—one dollar."

She was frightened, but she clung to her camera.

"You're not going to take my kodak from me," she said.

"I'm going to take that film out. And you pay one dollar, fine, sec."

The girl relinquished the camera, the Indian took out the film.

"Now you pay me one dollar, or I don't give you back this kodak."

Rather sullenly, she took out her purse and gave the two silver half-dollars. The Indian returned the camera, pocketed the money, and turned aside with a sort of triumph. Done it over one specimen of the white race.

There were not very many Indians helping to put up the pole.

"I never see so few boys helping put up the pole," said Tony Romero to me.

"Where are they all?" I asked. He shrugged his shoulders.

Dr West, a woman doctor from New York who has settled in one of the villages, was with us. Mass was being said inside the church, and she would have liked to go in. She is well enough known too. But two Indians were at the church-door, and one put his elbow in front of her.

"You Catholic?"

"No, I'm not."

"Then you can't come in."

The same almost jeering triumph in giving the white man—or the white woman—a kick. It is the same the whole world over, between dark-skin and white. Dr West, of course, thinks everything Indian wonderful. But she wasn't used to being rebuffed, and she didn't like it. But she found excuses.

"Of course," she said, "they're quite right to exclude the white people, if the white people can't behave themselves. It seems there were some Americans, boys and girls, in the church yesterday, insulting the images of the saints, shrieking, laughing, and saying they looked like monkeys. So now *no* white people are allowed inside the church."

I listened and said nothing. I had heard the same story at Buddhist temples in Ceylon. For my own part, I have long since passed the stage when I want to crowd up and stare at anybody's spectacle, white man's or dark man's.

I stood on one of the first roofs of the north pueblo. The iron bell of the church began to bang-bang-bang. The sun was down beyond the far-off, thin clear line of the western mesa, the light had ceased glowing on the pison-dotted foot-hills beyond the south

pueblo. The square beneath was thick with people. And the Indians began to come out of church.

Two Indian women brought a little dressed-up Madonna to her platform in the green starting-bower. Then the men slowly gathered round the drum. The bell clanged. The tom-tom beat. The men slowly uplifted their voices. The wild music resounded strangely against the banging of that iron bell, the silence of the many faces, as the group of Indians in their sheets and their best blankets, and in their ear-rings and brilliant scarlet trousers, or emerald trousers, or purple trousers, trimmed with beads, trod the slow bird-dance sideways, in feet of beaded moccasins, or yellow doeskin moccasins, singing all the time like drumming coyotes, slowly down and across the bridge to the south side, and up the incline to the south kiva. One or two Apaches in their beaded waist-coats and big black hats were among the singers, distinguishable by their thick build also. An old Navajo chief was among the encouragers.

As dusk fell, the singers came back under a certain house by the south kiva, and as they passed under the platform they broke and dispersed, it was over. They seemed as if they were grinning subtly as they went: grinning at being there in all that white crowd of inquisitives. It must have been a sort of ordeal, to sing and tread the slow dance between that solid wall of silent, impassive white faces. But the Indians seemed to take no notice. And the crowd only silently, impassively watched. Watched with that strange, static American quality of *laissez faire* and of indomitable curiosity.



## ETERNITY

BY YVOR WINTERS

THE small schoolroom was up stairs, and from the narrow window I could see the hills. The schoolyard was bare, with a few cinderpiles, and the leaves had already fallen from the trees.

The days were grey and still, and the camp was silent. The shacks were dull blue, grey, and brown, and most of them had been there forty years. Back of the main street their arrangement was indefinite. The sides of the valleys rose sharply, stiff lines of red and yellow.

For days there was no change, and then the snow fell. Change was an abstraction on the air. We were more than ever shut in.

I sat at my desk, barely conscious of the class. My knowing dimmed their brains, and they watched the soundless air secretly.

Sometimes one whispered, and I slapped his hand with a ruler. The hand of a certain negro boy was grey and wrinkled, and curled slowly after the ruler left it; and his mouth widened and contracted a little, slowly, like the hand.

I had seen this boy often, for nearly every night he hunched close to the stove while the men were eating; and after supper he gathered up what laundry he could, looked at the men with his meaningless smile, and stepped carefully into the winter night. Then I withdrew to an empty room I shared with an indeterminate consciousness. There was no heat, and the soiled blankets were thin.

I did not believe in the existence of precisions. It was no matter whether I sat behind my desk or behind the window of my room. Often I heard the pale Slavs stamping and shouting below me, and one night a man wept with drunkenness.

The cinders in the moonlight were the same; I saw nothing but perpetuity.

## MANY MARRIAGES

BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON

### VII (continued)

NOW one was back in fancy on the hillside again. There was an opening among the trees and through this one looked, seeing the whole valley below. There was a large town down the river somewhere, not the town where he and his bride had got off the train, but a much larger one with factories. Some people had come up river in boats from the town and were preparing to have a picnic in a grove of trees, up stream and across the river from her uncle's house.

There were both men and women in the party and the women had on white dresses. It was charming to watch them moving in and out among the green trees and one of them came down to the river's edge and, putting one foot in a boat that was drawn up on the bank, and with the other on the bank itself, she leaned over to fill a pitcher with water. There was herself and her reflection in the water, seen faintly, even from this distance. There was a going together and a coming apart. The two white figures opened and closed like a delicately tinted shell.

Young Webster on the hill had not looked at his bride and they were both silent, but he was becoming almost insanely excited. Was she thinking the thoughts he was thinking? Had her nature also opened itself, as had his?

It was becoming impossible to keep things straight in the mind. What was he thinking and what was she thinking and feeling? Far away in the wood across the river the white figures of women were moving about among the trees. The men of the picnic party, with their darker clothes could no longer be discerned. One no longer thought of them. The white clad women's figures were being woven in and out among the sturdy upstanding trunks of the trees.

There was a woman on the hill behind him and she was his bride. Perhaps she was having just such thoughts as himself. That must be true. She was a woman and young and she would be afraid, but there came a time when fear must be put aside. One was a male

and at the proper time went towards the female and took her. There was a kind of cruelty in nature and at the proper time that cruelty became a part of one's manhood.

He closed his eyes and rolling over to his belly got to his hands and knees. If one stayed longer lying quietly at her feet there would be a kind of insanity. Already there was too much anarchy within. "At the moment of death all of life passes before a man." What a silly notion. "What about the moment of the coming of life?"

He was on his knees like an animal, looking at the ground, not yet looking at her. With all the strength of his being he tried to tell his daughter of the meaning of that moment in his life.

"How shall I say how I felt? Perhaps I should have been a painter or a singer. My eyes were closed and within myself were all the sights, sounds, smells, feeling of the world of the valley into which I had been looking. Within myself I comprehended all things, everything.

"Things came in flashes, in colours. First there were the yellows, the golden shining yellow things, not yet born. The yellows were little streaks of shining colour buried down with the dark blues and blacks of the soil. The yellows were things not yet born, not yet come into the light. They were yellow because they were not yet green. Soon the yellows would combine with the dark colours in the earth and spring forth into a world of colour. There would be a sea of colour, running in waves, splashing over everything. Spring would come, within the earth, within me too."

Birds were flying in the air over a river, and young Webster, with his eyes closed, crouched before the woman, was himself the birds in the air, the air itself, and the fishes in the river below. It seemed to him now that if he were to open his eyes and look back, down into the valley, he could see, even from that great distance, the movements of the fins of fishes in the waters of the river far below.

Well he had better not open his eyes now. Once he had looked into a woman's eyes and she had come to him like a swimmer coming up out of the sea, but then something had happened to spoil everything. He crept towards her. Now she had begun to protest. "Don't," she said, "I'm afraid."

It would not do to stop now. There was a time came when one must not stop. He threw his arms out, took her protesting and crying into his arms.

## VIII

"Why must one commit rape, rape of the conscious, rape of the unconscious?"

John Webster sprang up from beside his daughter and then whirled quickly about. A word had come up out of the body of his wife sitting unobserved on the floor behind him. "Don't," she said and then, after opening and closing her mouth twice, ineffectually, repeated the word. "Don't, don't," she said again. The words seemed to be forcing themselves through her lips. Her body lumped down there on the floor had become just a strangely misshapen bundle of flesh and bones.

She was pale, of a pasty paleness.

John Webster had jumped off the bed as a dog, lying asleep in the dust of a roadway, might have leaped out of the path of a rapidly moving vehicle.

The devil! His mind was jerked back into the present swiftly, violently. A moment before he had been with a young woman on a hillside above a wide sun-washed valley and had been making love to her. The love-making had not been a success. It had turned out badly. There had been a tall slender girl who had submitted her body to a man, but who had been all the time terribly frightened and beset by a sense of guilt and shame. After the love-making she had cried, not with an excess of tenderness, but because she had felt unclean. They had walked down the hillside later and she had tried to tell him how she felt. Then he also had begun to feel mean and unclean. Tears had come into his own eyes. He had thought she must be right. What she said almost everyone said. After all man was not an animal. Man was a conscious thing trying to struggle upwards out of animalism. He had tried to think everything out that same night as he, for the first time, lay in bed beside his wife, and he had come to certain conclusions. She was no doubt right in her belief that there were certain impulses in men that had better be subjected to the power of the will. If one just let oneself go one became no better than a beast.

He had tried hard to think everything out clearly. What she had wanted was that there be no love-making between them except for the purpose of breeding children. If one went about the business of bringing children into the world, making new citizens for the state and all that, then one could feel a certain dignity in love-

making. She had tried to explain how humiliated and mean she had felt that day when he came into her naked presence. For the first time they had talked of that. It had been made ten times, a thousand times worse because he had come the second time and the others had seen him. The clean moment of their relationship was denied with determined insistence. After that had happened she could not bear to remain in the company of her girl friend and, as for her friend's brother—well, how could she ever look into his face again? Whenever he looked at her he would be seeing her not properly clothed as she should be, but shamelessly naked and on a bed with a naked man holding her in his arms. She had been compelled to get out of the house, go home at once, and of course, when she got home, everyone wondered what had happened that her visit had come to such an abrupt end. The trouble was that when her mother was questioning her, on the day after her arrival home, she suddenly burst into tears.

What they thought after that she didn't know. The truth was that she began to be afraid of everyone's thoughts. When she went into her bedroom at night she was almost ashamed to look at her own body and had got into the habit of undressing in the darkness. Her mother was always dropping remarks. "Did your coming home so suddenly have anything to do with the young man in that house?"

After she had come home, and because she began to feel so ashamed of herself in the presence of other people, she had decided she would join a church, a decision that had pleased her father, who was a devout church member. The whole incident had in fact drawn her and her father closer together. Perhaps that was because, unlike her mother, he never bothered her with embarrassing questions.

Anyway she had made up her mind that if she ever married she would try to make her marriage a pure thing, based on comradeship, and she had felt that after all she must marry John Webster if he ever repeated his proposal of marriage. After what had happened that was the only right thing for them both to do and now that they were married it would be right also for them to try and make up for the past by leading clean pure lives and trying never to give way to the animal impulses that shocked and frightened people.

John Webster was standing facing his wife and daughter and his mind had gone back to the first night in bed with his wife and to the

many other nights they had spent together. On that first night, long ago, when she lay talking to him, the moonlight came in through a window and fell on her face. She had been very beautiful at the moment. Now that he no longer approached her, afire with passion, but lay quietly beside her, with her body drawn a little away and with his arm about her shoulders, she was not afraid of him and occasionally put up her hand and touched his face.

The truth was that he had got the notion into his head that there was in her a kind of spiritual power divorced altogether from the flesh. Outside the house, along the river banks, frogs were calling their throaty calls and once in the night some strange weird call came out of the air. That must have been some night bird, perhaps a loon. The sound wasn't a call, really. It was a kind of wild laugh. From another part of the house, on the same floor there came the sound of her uncle's snoring.

The two people had slept little. There was so much to say. After all they were hardly acquainted. What he thought at the time was that she wasn't a woman after all. She was a child. Something dreadful had happened to the child and he was to blame and now that she was his wife he would try hard to make everything all right. If passion frightened her he would subdue his passions. A thought had got into his head that had stayed there for years. It was that spiritual love was stronger and purer than physical love, that they were two different and distinct things. He had felt quite exalted when that notion came. He wondered now, as he stood looking down at the figure of his wife, what had happened that the notion, at one time so strong in him, had not enabled him or her to get happiness together. One said the words and then, after all, they didn't mean anything. They were trick words of the sort that were always fooling people, forcing people into false positions. He had come to hate such words. "Now I accept the flesh first, all flesh," he thought vaguely, still looking down at her. He turned and stepped across the room to look in a glass. The flame of the candles made light enough so that he could see himself quite distinctly. It was a rather puzzling notion, but the truth was, that every time he had looked at his wife during the last few weeks he had wanted to run at once and look at himself in a glass. He had wanted to assure himself of something. The tall slender girl who had once lain beside him in a bed, with the moonlight falling on her face, had become the heavy



inert woman now in the room with him, the woman who was at this moment crouched on the floor at the foot of the bed. How much had he become like that?

One didn't escape animalism so easily. Now the woman on the floor was so much more like an animal than himself. Perhaps the very sins he had committed, his shamefaced running off sometimes to other women in the cities, had saved him. "That would be a pronouncement to throw into the teeth of the good pure people if it were true," he thought with a quick inner throb of satisfaction.

The woman on the floor was like a heavy animal that had suddenly become very ill. He stepped back to the bed and looked at her with a queer impersonal light in his eyes. She had difficulty holding up her head. The light from the candles, cut off from her submerged body by the bed itself, shone full on her face and shoulders. The rest of her body was buried in a kind of darkness. His mind remained the alert swift thing it had been ever since he had found Natalie. In a moment now he could do more thinking than he had done before in a year. If he ever became a writer, as he sometimes thought maybe he would, after he had gone away with Natalie, he would never want for things to write about. If one kept the lid off the well of thinking within oneself, let the well empty itself, let the mind consciously think any thoughts that came to it, accepted all thinking, all imaginings, as one accepted the flesh of people, animals, birds, trees, plants, one might live a hundred or a thousand lives in one life. To be sure it was absurd to go stretching things too much, but one could at least play with the notion that one could become something more than just one individual man and woman living one narrow circumscribed life. One could tear down all walls and fences and walk in and out of many people, become many people. One might in himself become a whole town full of people, a city, a nation.

The thing to bear in mind, however, now, at this moment was the woman on the floor, the woman whose voice had, but a moment before, called out again the word her lips had always been saying to him.

"Don't! Don't! Let's not, John! Not now, John!" What persistent denial, of himself, perhaps of herself, too, there had been.

It was rather absurdly cruel how impersonal he felt towards her. It was likely few people in the world ever realized what depths of

cruelty lay sleeping within themselves. All the things that came out of the well of thinking within oneself, when one jerked off the lid, were not easy to accept as a part of oneself.

As for the woman on the floor, if one let one's fancy go, one could stand as he was now doing, looking directly at the woman, and could think the most absurdly inconsequential thoughts.

For one thing one could have the fancy that the darkness in which her body was submerged, because of the accident that the light from the candles did not fall on it, was the sea of silence into which she had, all through these years, been sinking herself deeper and deeper.

And the sea of silence was just another and fancier name for something else, for that deep well within all men and women, of which he had been thinking so much during the past few weeks.

The woman who had been his wife, all people for that matter, spent their entire lives sinking themselves deeper and deeper into that sea. If one wanted to let oneself get more and more fancy about the matter, indulge in a kind of drunken debauch of fancy, as it were, one could in a half playful mood jump over some invisible line and say that the sea of silence into which people were always so intent on sinking themselves was in reality death. There was a race towards the goal of death between the mind and body and almost always the mind arrived first.

The race began in childhood and never stopped until either the body or mind had worn itself out and stopped working. Everyone carried about, all the time, within oneself life and death. There were two gods sitting on two thrones. One could worship either, but in general mankind had preferred kneeling before death.

The god of denial had won the victory. To reach his throne-room one went through long hallways of evasion. That was the road to his throne-room, the road of evasion. One twisted and turned, felt his way in the darkness. There were no sudden and blinding flashes of light.

John Webster had got a notion regarding his wife. It was sure the heavy inert woman, now looking up into his face from the darkness of the floor, unable to speak to him, had little or nothing to do with a slender girl he had once married. For one thing how utterly unlike they were physically. It wasn't the same woman at all. He could see that. Any one who had looked at the two women could see that they had really nothing physically in common. But did

she know that, had she ever thought of that, had she been, in any but a very superficial way, aware of the changes that had taken place in her? He decided she had not. There was a kind of blindness common to almost all people. The thing called beauty, that men sought in women, and that women, although they did not speak of it so often, were also looking for in men wasn't a thing that remained. When it existed at all it came to people only in flashes. One came into the presence of another and the flash came. How confusing that was. Strange things like marriages followed. "Until death do us part." Well, that was all right too. One had to try to get things straight if one could. When one clutched at the thing called beauty in another death always came, bobbing its head up too.

How many marriages among people. John Webster's mind was flying about. He stood looking at the woman who, although they had separated long before—they had really and irrevocably separated one day on a hill above a valley in the state of Kentucky—was still in an odd way bound to him, and there was another woman who was his daughter in the same room. The daughter stood beside him. He could put out his hand and touch her. She was not looking at himself or her mother, but at the floor. What was she thinking? What thoughts had he stirred up in her? What would be the result to her of the events of the night? There were things he couldn't answer, that he had to leave on the knees of the gods.

His mind was racing, racing. There were certain men he had always been seeing in the world. Usually they belonged to a class known as fellows with shaky reputations. What had happened to them? There were men who walked through life with a certain easy grace of manner. In some way they were beyond good and evil, stood outside the influences that made or unmade other men. John Webster had seen a few such men and had never been able to forget them. Now they passed, as in a procession, before his mind's eyes.

There was an old man with a white beard who carried a heavy walking stick and was followed by a dog. He had broad shoulders and walked with a certain stride. John Webster had encountered the man once, as he drove on a dusty country road. Who was the fellow? Where was he going? There was about him a certain air. "Go to the devil then," his manner seemed to say. "I'm a man walking here. Within me there is kingship. Go prattle of democracy and equality if you will, worry your silly heads about a life

after death, make up little lies to cheer your way in the darkness, but get out of my way. I walk in the light."

It might be all just a silly notion, what John Webster was now thinking about an old man he had once met walking on a country road. It was certain he remembered the figure with extraordinary sharpness. He had stopped his horse to gaze after the old man, who had not even bothered to turn and look at him. Well the old man had walked with a kingly stride. Perhaps that was the reason he had attracted John Webster's attention.

Now he was thinking of him and a few other such men he had seen during his life. There was one, a sailor who had come down to a wharf in the city of Philadelphia. John Webster was in that city on business and having nothing to do one afternoon had gone down to where ships were loading and unloading. A sailing vessel, a brigantine, lay at the wharf, and the man he had seen came down to it. He had a bag over his shoulder, containing perhaps his sea clothes. He was no doubt a sailor, about to sail before the mast on the brigantine. What he did was simply to come to the vessel's side, throw his bag aboard, call to another man who put his head out at a cabin door, and turning walked away.

But who had taught him to walk like that? The old Harry! Most men and women too, crept through life like sneaks. What gave them the sense of being such underlings, such dogs? Were they constantly besmearing themselves with accusations of guilt and, if that was it, what made them do it?

The old man in the road, the sailor walking off along a street, a negro prize fighter he had once seen driving an automobile, a gambler at the horse races in a southern city, who walked wearing a loud checkered vest before a grandstand filled with people, a woman actress he had once seen coming out at the stage entrance of a theatre, reprobates all perhaps and all walking with the stride of kings.

What had given such men and women this respect for themselves? It was apparent respect for self must be at the bottom of the matter. Perhaps they hadn't at all the sense of guilt and shame that had made of the slender girl he had once married the heavy inarticulate woman now squatted so grotesquely on the floor at his feet. One could imagine some such person as he had in mind saying to himself, "Well, here I am, you see, in the world. I have this long or short body, this brown or yellow hair. My eyes are of a

certain colour. I eat food, I sleep at night. I shall have to spend the whole of my life going about among people in this body of mine. Shall I crawl before them or shall I walk upright like a king? Shall I hate and fear my own body, this house in which I must live, or shall I respect and care for it? Well, the devil! The question is not worth answering. I shall take life as it offers itself. For me the birds shall sing, the green spread itself over the earth in the spring, for me the cherry tree in the orchard shall blossom."

John Webster had a fanciful picture of the man of his fancy going into a room. He closed the door. A row of candles stood on a mantel above a fire-place. The man opened a box and took from it a silver crown. Then he laughed softly and put the crown on his own head. "I crown myself a man," he said.

It was amazing. One was in a room looking at a woman who had been one's wife, and one was about to set out on a journey and would not see her again. Of a sudden there was this blinding rush of thoughts. One's fancy played far and wide. One seemed to have been standing in one spot thinking thoughts for hours, but in reality only a few seconds had passed since the voice of his wife, calling out that word, "don't" had interrupted his own voice telling a tale of an ordinary unsuccessful marriage.

The thing now was to keep his daughter in mind. He had better get her out of the room now. She was moving towards the door to her own room and in a moment would be gone. He turned away from the white-faced woman on the floor and watched his daughter. Now his own body was thrust between the bodies of the two women. They could not see each other.

There was a story of a marriage he had not finished, would never finish telling now, but in time his daughter would come to understand what the end of the story must inevitably be.

There was something that should be thought of now. His daughter was going out of his presence. Perhaps he would never see her again. One continually dramatized life, made a play of it. That was inevitable. Every day of one's life consisted of a series of little dramas for which one was always casting oneself for an important part in the performance. It was annoying to forget one's lines, not to walk out upon the stage when one had got one's cue. Nero fiddled when Rome was burning. He had forgotten what part he had assigned to himself and so fiddled in order not to give himself away.



Perhaps he had intended making an ordinary politician's speech about a city rising again from the flames.

Blood of the saints! Would his daughter walk calmly out of the room without turning at the door? What had he yet intended saying to her? He was growing a little nervous and upset.

His daughter was standing in the doorway leading to her own room, looking at him, and there was a kind of intense half-insane mood in her as all evening there had been in him. He had infected her with something out of himself. After all there had been what he had wanted, a real marriage. After this evening the younger woman could never be what she might have been, had this evening not happened. Now he knew what he wanted for her. Those men, whose figures had just visited his fancy, the race track man, the old man in the road, the sailor on the docks, there was a thing they had got hold of he had wanted her to have hold of too.

Now he was going away with Natalie, with his own woman, and he would not see his daughter again. She was a young girl yet, really. All of womanhood lay before her.

"I'm damned. I'm crazy as a loon," he thought. He had suddenly a ridiculous desire to begin singing a silly refrain that had just come into his head.

Diddle de di do,  
Diddle de di do,  
Chinaberries grow on a chinaberry tree.  
Diddle de di do.

And then his fingers, fumbling about in his pockets, came upon the thing he had unconsciously been looking for. He clutched it, half convulsively, and went toward his daughter, holding it between his thumb and finger.

On the afternoon of the day, on which he had first found his way in at the door of Natalie's house, and when he had become almost distracted from much thinking, he had found a bright little stone on the railroad track near his factory.

When one tried to think his way along a too difficult road one was likely, at any moment, to get lost. One went up some dark lonely road and then, becoming frightened, one became at the same time



shrill and distracted. There were things to be done, but one could do nothing. For example and at the most vital moment in life one might spoil everything by beginning to sing a silly song. Others would throw up their hands. "He's crazy," they would say, as though such a saying ever meant anything at all.

Well, once before, he had been, as he was now, at just this moment. Too much thinking had upset him. The door of Natalie's house had been opened and he had been afraid to enter. He had planned to run away from her, go to the city and get drunk and write her a letter telling her to go away to where he would not have to see her again. He had thought he preferred to walk in loneliness and darkness, to take the road of evasion to the throne-room of the god Death.

And at the moment all this was going on his eye had caught the glint of a little green stone lying among all the grey meaningless stones in the gravel bed of a railroad track. That was in the late afternoon and the sun's rays had been caught and reflected by the little stone.

He had picked it up and the simple act of doing so had broken a kind of absurd determination within him. His fancy, unable at the moment to play over the facts of his life, had played over the stone. A man's fancy, the creative thing within him, was in reality intended to be a healing thing, a supplementary and healing influence to the working of the mind. Men sometimes did a thing they called, "going it blind," and at such moments did the least blind acts of their whole lives. The truth was that the mind working alone was but a one-sided, maimed thing.

"Hito, tito, there's no use my trying to become a philosopher." John Webster was stepping towards his daughter who was waiting for him to say or do something that had not yet been done. Now he was quite all right again. Some minute readjustment had taken place inside himself as it had on so many other occasions within the last few weeks.

Something like a gay mood had come over him. "In one evening I have managed to plunge pretty deeply down into the sea of life," he thought.

He became a little vain. There he was, a man of the middle class, who had lived all his life in a Wisconsin industrial town. But a few weeks before he had been but a colourless fellow in an almost

altogether colourless world. For years he had been going along, just so, day after day, week after week, year after year, going along streets, passing people in the streets, picking his feet up and setting them down, thump thump, eating food, sleeping, borrowing money at banks, dictating letters in offices, going along thump thump, not daring to think or feel much of anything at all.

Now he could think more thoughts, have more fancies, while he took three or four steps across a room towards his daughter, than he had sometimes dared do in a whole year of his former life. There was a picture of himself in his fancy now that he liked.

In the fanciful picture he had climbed up to a high place above the sea and had taken off his clothes. Then he had run to the end of a cliff and had leaped off into space. His body, his own white body, the same body in which he had been living all through these dead years, was now making a long graceful arched curve against a blue sky.

That was rather nice too. It made a picture for the mind to take hold of and it was pleasant to think of one's body as making sharp striking pictures.

He had plunged far down into the sea of lives, into the clear warm still sea of Natalie's life, into the heavy salt dead sea of his wife's life, into the swiftly running young river of life that was in his daughter Jane.

"I'm a great little mixer-up of figures of speech, but at the same time I'm a great little swimmer in seas," he said aloud to his daughter.

Well, he had better be a little careful too. Her eyes were becoming puzzled again. It would take a long time for one, living with another, to become used to the sight of things jerked suddenly up out of the wells of thought within oneself and he and his daughter would perhaps never live together again.

He looked at the little stone held so firmly between his thumb and finger. It would be better to keep his mind fastened upon that now. It was a small, a minute thing, but one could fancy it looming large on the surface of a calm sea. His daughter's life was a river running down to the sea of life. She would want something to which she could cling when she had been cast out into the sea. What an absurd notion. A little green stone would not float in the sea. It would sink. He smiled knowingly.

There was the little stone held before him, in his extended hand. He had picked it up on a railroad track one day and had indulged in fancies concerning it and the fancies had healed him. By indulging in fancies concerning inanimate objects, one in a strange way glorified them. For example a man might go to live in a room. There was a picture in a frame on a wall, the walls of a room, an old desk, two candles under a Virgin, and a man's fancy made the place a sacred place. All the art of life perhaps consisted in just letting the fancy wash over and colour the facts of life.

The light from the two candles under the Virgin fell on the stone he held before him. It was about the size and shape of a small bean and was dark green in colour. In certain lights its colour changed swiftly. There was a flash of yellow green as of new-grown things just coming out of the ground and then that faded away and the stone became altogether a dark lusty green, as of the leaves of oak trees in the late summer, one could fancy.

How clearly John Webster had remembered everything now. The stone he had found on the railroad track had been lost by a woman who was travelling west. The woman had worn it among other stones in a brooch at her throat. He remembered how his imagination had created her at the moment.

Or had it been set in a ring and worn on her finger?

Things were a bit mixed. Now he saw the woman quite clearly, as he had seen her in fancy once before, but she was not on a train, but was standing on a hill. It was winter and the hill was coated with a light blanket of snow and below the hill, in a valley, was a wide river covered with a shining sheet of ice. A man, a middle-aged, rather heavy-looking man stood beside the woman and she was pointing at something in the distance. The stone was set in a ring worn on the extended finger.

Now everything became very clear to John Webster. He knew now what he wanted. The woman on the hill was one of the strange people, like the sailor who had come down to the ship, the old man in the road, the actress coming out of the stage door of the theatre, one of the people who had crowned themselves with the crown of life.

He stepped to his daughter and taking her hand opened it and laid the little stone on her palm. Then he carefully closed her fingers until her hand was a fist.

He smiled, a knowing little smile and looked into her eyes. "Well, now Jane, it's pretty hard to tell you what I'm thinking," he said. "You see, there are a lot of thoughts in me I can't get out without time and I'm going away. I want to give you something."

He hesitated. "This stone," he began again, "it's something for you to cling to perhaps, yes, that's it. In moments of doubt cling to it. When you become almost distracted and do not know what to do hold it in your hand."

He turned his head and his eyes seemed to be taking in the room slowly, carefully, as though not wanting to forget anything that made a part of the picture in which he and his daughter were now the central figures.

"As a matter of fact," he began again, "a woman, a beautiful woman might, you see, hold many jewels in her hand. She might have many loves you see and the jewels might be the jewels of experience, the challenges of life she had met, eh?"

John Webster seemed to be playing some fanciful game with his daughter, but now she was no longer frightened, as when she had first come into the room, or puzzled as she had been but a moment before. She was absorbed in what he was saying. The woman crouched on the floor behind her father was forgotten.

"There's one thing I shall have to do before I go away. I've got to give you a name for this little stone," he said, still smiling. Opening her hand again he took it out and went and stood for a moment holding it before one of the candles. Then he returned to her and again put it into her hand.

"It is from your father, but he is giving it to you at the moment when he is no longer being your father and has begun to love you as a woman. Well, I guess you'd better cling to it, Jane. You'll need it, God knows. If you want a name for it call it the Jewel of Life," he said and then, as though he had already forgotten the incident he put his hand on her arm and pushing her gently through the door closed it behind her.

## IX

There still remained something for John Webster to do in the room. When his daughter had gone he picked up his bag and went out into the hallway as though about to leave without more words

to the wife, who still sat on the floor with her head hanging down, as though unaware of any life about her.

When he had got into the hallway and had closed the door he set his bag down and came back. As he stood within the room, with the knob still held in his hand, he heard a noise on the floor below. "That's Katherine. What's she doing up at this time of the night?" he thought. He took out his watch and went nearer the burning candles. It was fifteen minutes to three. "We'll catch the early morning train at four all right," he thought.

There was his wife, or rather the woman who for so long a time had been his wife, on the floor at the foot of the bed. Now her eyes were looking directly at him. Still the eyes had nothing to say. They did not even plead with him. There was in them something that was hopelessly puzzled. If the events that had transpired in the room on that night had torn the lid off the well she carried about within herself she had managed to clamp it back on again. Now perhaps the lid would never again stir from its place. John Webster felt peculiarly as he fancied an undertaker might feel on being called at night into the presence of a dead body.

"The devil! Such fellows perhaps had no such feelings." Quite unconscious of what he was doing he took out a cigarette and lit it. He felt strangely impersonal; like one watching a rehearsal for some play in which one is not particularly interested. "It's a time of death all right," he thought. "The woman is dying. I can't say whether or not her body is dying, but there's something within her that has already died." He wondered if he had killed her, but had no sense of guilt in the matter.

He went to stand at the foot of the bed and, putting his hand on the railing, leaned over to look at her.

It was a time of darkness. A shiver ran through his body and dark thoughts like flocks of blackbirds flew across the field of his fancy.

"The devil! There's a hell too! There's such a thing as death, as well as such a thing as life," he told himself. Here was however an amazing and quite interesting fact too. It had taken a long time and much grim determination for the woman on the floor before him to find her way along the road to the throne-room of death. "Perhaps no one, while there is life within him to lift the lid, ever becomes quite submerged in the swamp of decaying flesh," he thought.

Thoughts stirred within John Webster that had not come to his mind for years. As a young man in college he must really have been more alive than he knew at the time. Things he had heard discussed by other young men, fellows who had a taste for literature, and that he had read in the books, the reading of which was a part of his duties, had all through the last few weeks been coming back to his mind. "One might almost think I had followed such things all my life," he thought.

The poet Dante, Milton with his *Paradise Lost*, the Hebrew poets of the older Testaments, all such fellows must at some time in their lives have seen what he was seeing at just this moment.

There was a woman on the floor before him and her eyes were looking directly into his. All evening there had been something struggling within her, something that wanted to come out to him and to her daughter. Now the struggle was at an end. There was surrender. He kept looking down at her with a strange fixed stare in his own eyes.

"It's too late. It didn't work," he said slowly. He did not say the words aloud, but whispered them.

A new thought came. All through his life with this woman there had been a notion to which he had clung. It had been a kind of beacon that now he felt had from the first led him into a false trail. He had in some way picked up the notion from others about him. It was peculiarly an American notion, always being indirectly repeated in newspapers, magazines, and books. Back of it was an insane, wishy-washy philosophy of life. "All things work together for good. God's in his Heaven, all's right with the world. All men are created free and equal."

"What an ungodly lot of noisy meaningless sayings drummed into the ears of men and women trying to live their lives!"

A great disgust swept over him. "Well, there's no use my staying here any longer. My life in this house has come to its end," he thought.

He walked to the door and when he had opened it turned again. "Good night and good-bye," he said as cheerfully as though he were just leaving the house in the morning for a day at the factory.

And then the sound of the door closing made a sharp jarring break in the silence of the house.

*The End*





*Courtesy of the Galerie Paul Rosenberg, Paris*

WOMAN READING. BY PABLO PICASSO







*Courtesy of the Galerie Paul Rosenberg, Paris*

WOMAN AND CHILD. BY PABLO PICASSO

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## PARIS LETTER

*February, 1923*

CONSORTIUM (cinema) invitation card showing several people being broken, roasted, rolled down hill on "the wheel," La Roue; also posters, nude figure on flaming ditto. Adaptation Musicale d'Arthur Honegger; "everything possible" done to make art a commercial proposition that must fundamentally remain a commercial proposition and please the million. Thanks, we presume, to Blaise Cendrars, there are interesting moments, and effects which belong, perhaps, only to the cinema. At least for the sake of argument we can admit that they are essentially cinematographic, and not a mere travesty and degradation of some other art. The bits of machinery, the varying speeds, the tricks of the reproducing machine are admirably exploited, according to pictorial concepts derived from contemporary abstract painters. The thing takes place on the railway, the driving wheels of the locomotive, et cetera, et cetera, the composition of the photos of the actual machinery, are interesting; and Mr Honegger's programmatic music accompanies them. Thus far the high-brow urge has carried the matter. These details are interpolated in a story (of sorts); and the rest of the show remains the usual drivelling idiocy of the cinema sentiment and St Vitus.

Any amount of careful thought has been spent on making the good part good; I dare say we should laud the experiment; but am not quite sure on what grounds. As experiment, yes; as publicity for cubism, i. e., to lead the low-brow toward the art of abstract composition, possibly; to settle the question (in the negative) i. e., to satisfy us once and for all that the cinema is no use as art, very probably.

You test a picture by its powers of endurance. If you can have it on your wall for six months without being bored, it is presumably as good a picture as you, personally, are capable of enjoying. Even if the individual photo, in cinema-photography is good, as those in Cendrars' films presumably are, one is never given time to be sure of it.

Also there is the dilemma; the instant that slap-stick comedy, personal touch, tender infancy, puppy dogs, "humour," "drammer," et cetera enter, the whole question of visual effects, composition, et cetera is chucked overboard. *Inévitablement*. Yes, I think we may as well say, *inévitavelmente*. Ineluctably.

With the progressive weakening of the popular mind, we may be subjected to a club-sandwich, an alternation of visual effects, photocinematographic effects, and the agile-flea melo-comic-sentimentokinosis. In passing, the French seem rather weak on continuous action in their films; lack of plot, or lack of transitions; giving us, not an action, but a poorly joined series of moving tableaux.

One must distinguish *La Roue* from *Caligari*. *La Roue* is honest, and the "art" portions frankly in debt to contemporary art. *Caligari* cribbed its visual effects, with craven impertinences, and then flashed up a notice, "This film isn't cubism; it represents the ravings et cetera." Precisely, ravings the inventors couldn't have thought of without the anterior work of new artists.

I should like to stigmatize a parallel impertinence: a recently pirated translation of Gourmont bears the legend "authorized translation." The hypocrisy of Prof. — can go no further. We salute this triumph of parsimony.

Man Ray's album (published by Léonce Rosenberg, 19 rue de la Baume) is interesting; although the reproductions do not carry the full force of his experiments in "painting with light," nor have any other reproductions yet succeeded in doing so. Ray's process is not involved in any mystery, it is misleading to call it "photography without a camera." Instead of placing a flat object on a piece of sensitized paper, he places a solid object before the paper, and shoots his light from various points, for various lengths of time, in varying intensity. (This is quite different from vortography, where the subject was selected and developed into a composition by the vortex of mirrors, and then carried through the lens onto a sensitized plate, from which any number of prints could be made.) Ray's process produces only one picture, with effects he can not get by taking a negative.

Coburn went out of photography into painting, *via* vortography; Ray beginning as excellent painter, has eliminated his interest in colour in his search for the immaterial (intermediate stage repre-

sented by his picture of fans). He stopped wanting to "bring everything to the surface of the canvas." His work, to which *he* attaches no label, may be termed expressionism, and it is a combination of forms in varying light. His defence, or explanation, is that the history of painting shows a series of swings from monochrome to strong colour; that people no longer complain of the lack of colour in etching; that white is all colours and black, the absorption of colour; and that, in fine, he is not destroying anything, he is adding something. He and Marcel Duchamp have carried their art to a point where it demands constant invention, and where they can't simply loll 'round basking in virtuosity. (That I get more pleasure from Man Ray's painting in colour, than from his admirable graduation of black and white, has nothing to do with the matter. A determined series of experiments persisting through a number of years deserves recognition, and one should do one's best to present the artist's own view with the maximum clarity.) Man Ray wants to express certain properties of light. He believes he can do so more effectively by a control of chemical reactions than with a brush; there is no divine ukase forbidding the artist to attempt employing one corner of chemistry as a fine art.

The Russians, the Rooshians (the reader will by now have observed that I have been driven or lured out of my studio, and that I, as a faithful and obedient chronicler, have been chasing around Paris, raking in the news) the Russians, as presented by the Moscow Art Theatre, and Chekhov's Cherry Orchard, confirm one's deepest prejudices, and leave one wondering whether Lenin, or any possible series of revolutions and cataclysms could possibly have *added* any further disorder to the life of that unfortunate race.

The Cherry Orchard is realism, and I don't in the least doubt it was well acted, and that Russians were, and are, like that, and that Chekhov was a great writer, trying to remedy the chaos by showing it its face in the mirror.

The Russian is the Caucasian with the top-layer of his head removed; these people of Chekhov's rush about the stage, sentimenting, and gibbering, or displaying a sympathetic *bonhomie*. The whole show is included by the apologist-summarist in one sentence concerning the second act: "*Mme Ranevskaia s'emporte à propos de tout.*"

Doubtless it is laudable to educate the masses. Drama has always, or nearly always, been didactic. Only a wobbly aestheticized age (recently) elevated the dogma that art shouldn't be didactic. Most good literature has been. The real law in writing is that literature shouldn't try to sell patent medicines. (Here included religion, taboos, et cetera.)

Greek drama was didactic, Omar is didactic. Homer is not didactic (except in the treatise on etiquette—Telemachus's visit to Menelaus). The trouble with "all Russian literature" is that it contains no didacticism on any points that can be of interest (oh, well, omit some of Dostoevsky, and Turgenev, et cetera). Let us say not ironically "all Russian literature," but the bulk of it, and the part the cultists are continually shoving at one, contains no problems that are of interest to any man with two grains of lucidity. They say Gorky's mother was a good woman, an energetic woman, and that she used to go among the peasants saying, "You should wash more; if you would wash more you wouldn't have so many lice." Excellent. Chekhov was a good man; he went among the suburban bourgeoisie, et cetera.

But the Abbey Theatre presents plays with greater neatness, greater economy in the introduction of characters, et cetera. In short, we can't lie down and wait for the Russian theatre to evangelize us into drama.

Pirandello's *La Volupté de l'Honneur* at the Atelier. At any rate a play one can sit through. (This fact worthy of attention as such plays have nearly ceased to exist. I had in fact supposed them extinct.) A vote of thanks due to Charles Dullin who has given us a possible theatre (I mean good plays, in an uncomfortable shed on the summit of the mount of martyrs).

Pirandello belongs in the post-Ibsen wave. He invents a false-dilemma, or no, a situation caused by ignorance, or more probably carelessness. The Marquis inadvertently stumbles on a Cartesian, on a detached intelligence, and by this mechanism the dramatist is able to revive the point-of-honour and the other tools of romanticism. Even Stendhal had to postulate a non-extant type of heroine in *Le Rouge et le Noir*.

Drama is probably bad (it nearly always *is* bad) because the author is forced (he nearly always is forced) to invent some palpable idiocy or falsity in order to "get things moving."



Pirandello however postulates his Cartesian, who continues to postulate the effects of an absolute concept, thrust into a protoplasmic environment. The play at least states a real opposition. And the best man wins the lady, so romance is satisfied; and the actors, in the case of Dullin's company, allow one to believe in the reality of the characters most of the time. I mean while the play is in progress. The motif may also be classified as the "truth *versus* conventionality" motif of the contemporary romantic revolt. The excellence of the Atelier presentation deserves emphasis, and Dullin our solid thanks.

It is unfair for me to talk of these things without warning the reader that I (personally) believe "the theatre" in general is no good, that plays are no good. This conviction is bound to colour my criticism, and the reader must discount my criticism to just the extent that he believes that the theatre can be good. Most plays are bad, even Greek plays. The Greek dramatists were inferior to Homer. The profoundest thing, perhaps the only really profound thing I ever heard in Prof. Schelling's class-room was the suggestion that Shakespeare became a playwright, because he couldn't make his mark as a poet.

When I say that plays are no good, I mean they are no good for any one who is capable of what I must call "poetic" or "literary" satisfaction.

The Greek play is an *ignis fatuus*. Cocteau has made an heroic attempt with the Antigone. I am not merely talking at random. The Agamemnon drives one to admiration; it is a great work, it probably knocks the spots off other Greek plays. The Prometheus Bound has an opening situation and trails off into nothing, et cetera. Years ago I took the Agamemnon to T. S. Eliot to see whether he could do anything with it, he being, as we all know, keen on Webster, English tragedy, et cetera. He kept my copy for a long time, and I believe considered the matter; at the end of three or four years nothing had happened, I grew impatient and thought I would have a shot at it. I tried every possible dodge, making the watchman a negro, and giving him a *fihn Géogiah voyce*; making the chorus talk cockney, et cetera. This is a usual form of evasion in modern drama. Ibsen makes his people provincial, Chekhov also, the Irish theatre talks dialect, to get a "language." In the Agamemnon there is simply too much stuff that doesn't function; you put it

in and the thing goes dead, you start omitting it, and the remains are insufficient.

Cocteau has made a desperate effort in his *Antigone*; he has got a simple and direct speech, most of the time. He has not wholly eliminated the "bloomin' syntax"; and the glued, glass ornament phrasing of the official classic translation obtrudes at moments. The virtues are probably shared about equally between Sophocles and the adapter.

Poetry is immortal, drama isn't. The *Antigone* of Sophocles contains great antitheses. It also contains stucco. The Greek sophistry about the irreplaceability of the brother for example.

It contains some *real* didacticism, *re* Individual *versus* State (i. e., state concentrated in Creon); the motivation is dated. The idea of a young lady acting as undertaker is almost as repellent to the modern auditor as the idea of her not acting as undertaker. In fact, the adapter has to carry a great lot of baggage: even when he has had the courage, as Cocteau has, to throw over a great mass of verbiage, to reduce the chorus to a megaphone, and a set of masks, hung over a canvas temple.

The "modern equivalent," the modern presentation of the basic struggle of *Antigone*? Oh, Lord, let us say it is the struggle of an hereditarily hampered and conditioned individual against the state. *Lo stato. En passant*, Lorenzo Medici's delightful sentence in his memoir for his son, "It is difficult to live rich in Florence, *senza aver lo stato* (without having the state)." *Antigone* will remain a symbol, yes. But a modern Sophocles would have to show her struggling, not with an individual Creon, but with the amorphous mass of Lloyd Georges, Wilsons, pettifogging small-town minds, the consummate blazing idiocy of bureaucracy. One merely becomes inarticulate at the sight of America naïvely blundering and blubbering into the evils of paternalism, red tape, paper-forms, regulations, short-time passports, et cetera, that Europe has already discovered to be a foulness. The interference of government, the excess of government!! et cetera. Government ought to be concerned with the traffic and main drains. There it ought to stop.

One ought *almost* to say it is the job of great art to keep government in its place, i. e., to kick it out of life, and reduce it to its proper, and wholly mechanical functions: street cars, water-mains, et cetera, a convenience, as your gas-range is a convenience.

This is not a cry for propagandist art, which means a touting one form of government in opposition to some other. It means an exclusion of politics, fads, crankisms from art; a driving them out of the minds of the few individuals who can, in their excess of natural energy, combine and form a civilization, in the midst of the unconscious and semi-conscious gehenna. This applies, naturally, only to the minds which have arrived at a consciousness of these things, there are the gazelles in the park and in the native forest, whose life is unconcerned with problems of administration. It is only by incalculable intensity of life, an intensity amounting to genius, that one can escape, even momentarily, from the pressure of this circumjacent, free oneself, or one's audience of six, from the bonds of blatant actuality.

The value of these things to the individual is slight, as trifling as his value to them: but their power to do him evil is almost infinite, and extends to his complete extermination. His power to retaliate is also slight; it does not in the least compare with their power to do him evil; only by supreme genius, or more usually by luck, by the million to one chance can he do anything against *lo stato*; the "ante" required of him is usually immolation.

The present plague of democracy is that we have lost the sense of demarcation between the Res Publica, the public business, and the affairs of the individual.

(I had wanted to discuss the search for reality in Pierre Hamp, and in the new prose, but have far overrun my space. Apropos of Thomas Mann's discussion of Spengler and citation of Novalis in the December DIAL, there is a magnificent sentence of Leonardo's: "Nature is full of causes which have never been put into experiment.")

The emphasis five paragraphs above is on *almost*. Of course the function of art, great or other, is to do nothing of the kind. Its function is to portray; but the portrayal must be done by those who are superlatively *aware*; and great art will be aware of the passion for τὸ καλόν, fighting against tyranny, against *lo stato*, if that *stato* is corrupt. Tyranny is the concentration of power into the hands of the ignorant, and the inept, the non-perceivers. The awareness will detect the present form of this tyranny, and not be limited by ancient symbols, even if it find it advisable to employ them. Artistic formulas are bad that prescribe limits to awareness.

If a man doesn't know that bureaucracy exists, that "social problems" (to use the most offensive and unliterary term possible) exist, he is a minor artist; just as "minor" as the doctrinaire editorial writer who doesn't know that anything else exists, and whose knowledge of humanity is only one generation deep. Whether one can get through this pasteboard and glue, into "the some more vital equation," is a vastly other question.

And Creon (Lloyd George, Wilson, Harding, Curzon, the banks) is, are, always complaining, in the words of Cocteau's Creon "*Tu as inventé la justice*": You have invented justice, or τὸ καλόν, or the belief in the dignity of the individual, or in liberty, or in non-interference with the peripheries of others, or a disbelief in the need for supervisors, or some other magnificence offensive to the control.

Sophocles having presented that equation, his play will continue to attract adapter and translator, despite the "baggage." And (to perorate) the classics will live as long as people can take their symbols as equivalent of some current struggle which they are unable to treat more directly, or with greater exactness of balance—despite the baggage, the dead weight of archaism, aesthetic faults, taboos.

EZRA POUND

## VIENNA LETTER

February, 1923

THIS year's Salzburg Festival took place in August and lasted three weeks. At the Salzburg municipal theatre four works of Mozart were played: *Don Juan*, *Il Seraglio*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *Così Fan Tutte*. The cast was composed of members of the Vienna Opera, supplemented by several male and female singers from Germany. At the same time, for fourteen consecutive evenings in a church which the archbishop of Salzburg had set aside for the occasion, they gave a sacred drama—or a miracle play, or whatever one chooses to call it—written by myself: *Das Salzburger Grosse Welttheater* (The Grand World-Theatre of Salzburg). The operas were conducted by Richard Strauss and Franz Schalk. The stage-manager of the *Grosse Welttheater* was Max Reinhardt.

On this occasion I am forced by circumstances to speak of my own personal work in my letter to the readers of *THE DIAL*. And I shall do this with pleasure and with directness, especially as you will probably, within a short time, see this piece, with its Reinhardt settings, on one of the large stages of New York.

Everyone knows that among the seventy or eighty sacred dramas (*autos sacramentales*) of Calderon there is one with the name of The Grand World-Theatre. I read in an English paper that my work was an "arrangement" of this work by Calderon. I do not find this term quite accurate—and so far as I know it was used by this one reporter only—but the question is not merely one of terminology; it concerns the delicate and almost imponderable relationship which works of art bear to one another. When *The World-Theatre* was issued in book form I added by way of preface a few lines treating of this relationship. They follow:

"It is a matter of common knowledge that there exists a sacred drama by Calderon, called *The Grand World-Theatre*. From this the entire basic metaphor is borrowed: that the world forms a stage on which people act out the play of life, each in the rôle that God has assigned him. Further, this source provides the titles of the

piece, and the names of the six characters by which mankind is represented. These elements do not belong to the great Spanish poet as his own creation, but to the wealth of myths and allegories which were formed in the Middle Ages and made over to later centuries."

The six characters by which mankind is represented are: the king, the rich man, the peasant, the beggar, wisdom, and beauty. Wisdom is a nun, beauty a court lady. As is evident, such naïve restraint as this goes back much farther than the seventeenth century of Calderon. These figures, each in its own niche surrounded by intricate Gothic tracery, belong to the world which we meet in the Flemish and northern-French tapestries of the fifteenth century. The *World-Theatre* is a miracle play, or a theatrical allegory. This is a very old dramatic form which has had its great epoch in all European literatures: in England of pre-Shakespearean times, and also in France before she surrendered her literature to the imitating of the Ancients . . . but with us, at least, this old form has never quite died out. Up to the end of the eighteenth century, Catholic South Germany and Austria possessed its folk-theatre, the subjects for which were drawn indiscriminately from the Bible or from the old treasures of allegory and the miracles. And Oberammergau with its *Passion Plays* is simply a survival of this naïve theatrical world, the last protruding point, so to speak, of a sunken island-continent. With the spirit of rationalism which spread over Europe at the time of the French Revolution these old art customs were finally swept away. In my present work, and in an earlier one—a dramatic reworking of the primitively and universally European *Everyman* material—I have quite deliberately taken up the torch which with us still lay glowing on the ground; and I believe that in this—as always happens to the seemingly quite instinctive processes of the artist—my hand has been guided by a concealed plurality. The new element which I have added to the traditional material is to be found in the figure of the beggar. In my work he stands as the chief character of the play, and is brought out as an individual against all others. The beggar of the old miracle plays was passive and resigned, the poor man of the gospels who is chosen for blessedness by the mere nature of his fate; while in this life, however, he is simply an object whereby other people can be tested; but I have presented the active beggar, the excluded, the disinherited eager for a place



among those who have inherited . . . a figure, consequently, such as could be seen in these proportions probably only at the present moment: the threat of chaos to the world of order. Among the many Americans of all classes whom I had the pleasure of meeting in Salzburg, several mentioned to me the name of Eugene O'Neill in reference to this character. Since then I have read *The Hairy Ape*, and I do find a certain analogy between my beggar and that unhappy stoker who is excluded from the ordered world and who yet displays a nerve-wracking yearning to belong somewhere. In both dramas the question which is posed is the same in its broad general outlines: it is the ominous, or the leering, question which chaos addresses to "order." And the answer which O'Neill gives to it is, so to speak, an optimistic one—from the standpoint of society—with an admixture of ugly irony in that he lets his poor beggar find in the cage of the gorilla the peace of death and the ultimate place which he "belongs to." The same question runs through the entire content of expressionism in all countries; or forms the impulse of ferment, if one objects to the word "content." But in the stating of its question, expressionism anticipates the answer, and this answer is the very opposite one from that of O'Neill. That is to say, from the standpoint of what we must call the world of society, the expressionist answer is pessimistic. My answer was not optimistic, nor was it pessimistic, but poetic, or religious. I have the disinherited beggar raise the ax against everything that opposes him: king and rich man, peasant (who corresponds with us to the smug, conservative, petty property owner) beauty, and pious wisdom, against absolutely everything. And from the situation and previous conversations it is evident that when he strikes he will be stronger than all of them together, and that the world structure of a thousand years—for indeed, the synthesis between Christianity and the half-Roman, half-Germanic system of justice in which we live is exactly that old—this structure will collapse under the blows of his ax. But at the same moment when he raises his arm with the ax, I have wisdom—under which guise I have tried to symbolize everything lofty, unselfish, godlike which we have in us, whether it is now of the sacred or the profane tradition—raise her hands in prayer; not for her own salvation, for she no longer believes in that, nor for the salvation of the world, which she is not convinced is worth being saved, but for him, precisely for him . . . and this at the very moment when he is

brandishing the instrument of destruction over his head and is about to bring it down with a crash. What next takes place in him is outside the province and the possibilities of the truly dramatic, and could not be said in a regular play, but only in a miracle. Something comes over him like a sudden trance: a change, a complete reversal. While she prays for him he lets his ax sink down, and falls on his knees. The trance which has taken hold of him was so complete that he no longer knows whether he has struck with his ax or not. Finally wisdom herself and the voices from angels above must tell him that he has not committed the enormous deed—but they sing it to him in such a way as to make him see that this very abstaining from action was the one great decisive act of his life; they make him understand that once again, in a flash of lightning, a Saul has become Paul. Indeed, he has been placed upon another plane, a plane where the division of power and of worldly possessions seems to him a matter of no moment. In one stroke he has become what may be called a wise man, or a Christ, or one of the Enlightened, or any other equivalent term. He turns his back on this whole world and goes into the forest, into the eternal forest, home of the wise man, and of the hermit. Next the passing of life is illustrated allegorically by a kind of ghostly dance of death in which all the characters participate; and following this, when he finally returns to go into his grave like all the others, he is a kind of holy hermit, with a long white beard and penetrating eyes which are no longer of this earth; the face is like that of Walt Whitman in his last photographs.

I hope that this summary sketch gives some idea of the play's general outlines and goes to show how old and new elements are here brought together. This method seems to me the natural procedure of the dramatist; and I do not see that the masters of the drama have gone about their task very differently. Indeed, even the ancient writers of tragedy, who might seem to us a beginning out of nothing, have similarly utilized in their works the material at hand. The truly magnificent thing about the present is that it contains within itself, in a vitally and magically existing form, so many things of the past. And the true destiny of the artist, it seems to me, lies in his feeling himself as the expression of a plurality which extends back into the remote past (along with that lateral plurality, that planetary contemporaneity, of which Whitman is so genial an expression); and he must create for himself the instrument of his art by starting from those isolated impressions and hal-

lucinations of the individual and by linking up with these as much of the traditional as he can encompass.

I cannot say that the public of these fourteen evenings had any difficulty in reacting to this religious or allegorical play, or that the play had any difficulty in carrying the minds of these people along with it. Everything happened without any one having to think of the process itself. Yet it was the most mixed public conceivable: not only because we, for the first time since the war, had assembled a completely international audience at a spot in Central Europe, but also because those elements belonging to our own nation—I refer to the Germans and the Austrians—were a very mixed audience socially. Alongside of the *nouveaux-riches* there sat many plain people, peasants with their wives and daughters, the petty bourgeois of our little country towns in the Alps, priests and nuns, and among them Americans, Scandinavians, Frenchmen, and residents of Berlin. The credit for having amalgamated this extraordinary jumble of incoherent individuals and viewpoints into an audience, yes, into a completely unified and truly naïve public which let itself “be taken in” in an almost childlike fashion . . . the credit for this lies entirely with Reinhardt’s settings. His *mise en scène* was the complete expression of the ripeness which this leading stage-manager of Europe has arrived at in recent years. It laid few stresses; but where it did stress, the result was extraordinarily powerful. And by means of the great rhythmic art with which these stresses were weighed against one another and distributed throughout the length of the play, it knitted together the entire action lasting over two hours without pause; as a result, there was no suspicion of drag, and the entire production was followed really breathlessly. A strong rhythmic faculty forms the essential effectiveness in this great stage-manager’s poetics; his unusual sense of space is the natural correlate to this: for the rhythmic is the attempt to grasp and organize time like space. In the twenty-five years that Reinhardt has been working as a stage-manager the analysis of space has formed the real centre of his activity. And in this tendency to conquer space as a new medium of expression, he is the appropriate dramatic director, leader, and representative of his entire generation. For the modern European actors—and I am certain, the Americans also, in so far as they are representative actors of our epoch—are interpreters of our new spiritual relationship to space. Consequently, what is essential to them, the mimic element—of

which the spoken word is only an ingredient—manifests a mysterious affinity to the tendencies of modern painters. (The actor of the earlier generation—I will name it, roughly, the Wagner generation—stood in the same relationship to music.) If we observe a European painting of this generation, as a canvas of Kokoschka, the figures stand out in space in such a manner as we never see them arranged in any picture of an earlier generation. Heavy with hate, or love; as though charged by electricity; in what one could call a rarefied atmosphere; a man sinks like a phantom into the depths of the picture; another, breathless, swollen with scorn, comes out at us like a straw-coloured tongue of lightning. This is completely identical with the compressed and violent juxtaposition and opposition of figures which Reinhardt conceives for an interior of Strindberg, peopled with men who hate one another, fear one another, standing, so to speak, with their faces in a dull reality, and their backs in a dream.

But all this of which I am now speaking is one part of a much broader and more complex spiritual movement. We are undoubtedly engaged in the difficult task of creating for ourselves a new reality; and this creation is attained through the complete questioning of reality, and thus through the deepest of dreams. But no one is more sensitive than the actor to these spiritual mysteries of an epoch; no one is a more delicate instrument for registering such changes in the spiritual climate, such vicissitudes of the contemporary. With the actor of earlier periods the universal tendency was first towards the grandly heroic, and later towards reality, or what was taken for reality; with the actor of our period the universal tendency is to make the created figure stand between reality and dreams, always half-way between the two, in an ambiguous light which throws the reflection of the dream upon reality, and something of reality upon the dream. And I feel quite certain that here again, in a remarkable linking-up of the modern with the remote, something in our imaginative life is in tune with the imaginative life of primitive peoples. Nothing seems to me so identical with the sinister quality which emanates from the great modern actor at such moments as the following passage which a missionary has written on the life of a primitive people:

“In the conception that men become animals by putting on their hides: tigers, bears, wolves, and so forth—what an elementary ex-

ample of the transformation which the actor undergoes by changing his costume, make-up, and so on!—in this conception, the Abiponas, an Indian people in lower Paraguay, take everything mystically, without regard for reason or logic. They are no longer concerned whether the man, in order to become a tiger, must cease to be a man, and then to become a man again must cease to be a tiger. What interests them is the wonderful mystical property which permits these individuals under certain conditions to share at once the nature of the man and of the tiger, and consequently makes them much more dreadful than men that are always men, and tigers that are always tigers."

Just as the person in disguise, half-way between man and tiger, fascinates the Abiponas, so that they cringe to him like helpless children, though they are not afraid of a real man, and if they come upon a real tiger boldly attack it with bow and battle-ax; in the same way we are fascinated and overwhelmed by a modern actor when he—and in this he is much more dreadful than the ghost of Banquo or of Hamlet's father—belongs to two kinds of space at once, that of dreams and that of reality, so that we cannot know when he begins to be in the one and ceases to be in the other.

I hasten to add that I am indebted for the above quotation to an interesting book, *Les Fonctions Mentales Dans les Sociétés Inférieures*, by the Sorbonne professor, M Lévy-Bühl; and I return from this digression to the Salzburger Grosse Welttheater. Reinhardt's *mise en scène* was extremely simple, consisting entirely in the fact that the church was hung up to a certain height with a material of a very beautiful scarlet red. But the unusual situation of being able to play in a church, that is, in a place the height of which is more than three times the height of a normal stage, gave him the opportunity for several effects which seemed quite natural, but which those present will not easily forget. I refer especially to those moments in which the warning and consoling calls of the angels descended from some unexpectedly high inner balcony of the dome; and the forms of these angels really seemed to arrive here, not by flying up from the earth, but by flying down from a much higher region. The strongest and, if you will, most vehement moment of all came at the beginning of the last third of the play, in that dance of death which preceded the wasting away and dying of the six allegorical figures. He did this to the accompaniment of a drum; but by its



rhythm it spread solemn horror through the assembly, and brought forth from many people a subdued sigh which, I believe, was much different from anything that could have been produced in a profane theatre, and much more intense. Moissi played the beggar. He was extraordinary, and his presentation had an internationality about it which was remarkably suited to so mixed a public as this one; whereas the part itself, being so international in its symbolic nature, would probably have suffered had it been done in a more definite manner, as something specifically German or Austrian. But Moissi is an Albanian by birth, an Italian by education. In his theatrical training he is half German, half Russian; there is nothing he would rather play than Tolstoi, and in this emotional world, one might say, he has taken root. So that his beggar had a Russian quality about it; and the spectre of Bolshevism stood very unmistakably behind his extraordinarily sparing and unforgettable movements. But at times his voice, with its Italian timbre, enabled him to handle his lines in a remarkable manner which was incomparably fitted to the marble church where so much of the Italian spirit of past centuries had found its expression.

The public which had assembled at this theatrical festival was composed of more discriminating and sensitive people of all countries than one has seen together for a number of years. In a certain sense, this was the first resurrection of the old, earlier Europe, with a very pronounced and very perceptible sprinkling of Americans. Relatively few Englishmen had come; but it was a pleasure to see our Mozart operas attended by so distinguished a Mozart-lover as Mr Lowes Dickinson, who is the political philosopher of Cambridge University. M Gémier, at the last moment, could not come from Paris; while we were able to greet among our guests M Fabre, administrator of the Comédie Française, and M Hébertot, the very artistic director of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. But Gémier sent Reinhardt and me a very handsome telegram which he has since reworked into an open letter, a genuine manifesto for the internationality of art. He announced here his definite decision to enter into a relationship of mutual collaboration with the German theatre. This letter, which was published in the Paris press, has become the object of heated chauvinistic attacks; but also it has met with very influential approval from those who hold to the other viewpoint.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL



# BOOK REVIEWS

## A DEFINITIVE HEARN

THE WRITINGS OF LAFCADIO HEARN. 16 volumes.  
*Illustrated. 8vo. 6351 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. First collected edition.*

FOR those who are interested in the ghostly, the exotic, in odd bits of folk-lore, grotesque or poetic, Lafcadio Hearn's books will always have more than a passing interest; for his intelligence, stimulated in remote places of the world, is sensitive to every fleeting incident, and he records the singular with an artistic prescience alert to the most subtle implications. His admirers will be grateful to Houghton Mifflin Company for at last bringing out in a uniform edition all his written works. The books are excellently edited and the illustrations, numbering well over a hundred, have been supplied by Mr Burton Holmes who was commissioned to go to Japan for the purpose of securing these interesting plates.

When Prosper Mérimée said to Théophile Gautier, "Your characters have no muscles," the other replied, "And yours have no draperies." It was the articulated intention of Lafcadio Hearn to clothe in textures of Latin luxuriance those bare structures of thought, which, for him, represented a certain Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon strength. A fusion not so very dissimilar had been accomplished for Italy in an earlier day by Giacomo Leopardi, and the similarity in development of these two men was, indeed, striking. Both suffered from deformities. Both knew poverty all their lives, both were pathologically sensitive and incurably idealistic, both were brought up Roman Catholics, and both turned their thwarted idealism with irreconcilable scorn against Christianity. But whereas the Italian, releasing his creative energy through an impregnable pessimism, and returning for his inspiration to the earliest writers of antiquity, achieved genius, Hearn, seeking to reconcile a mystical faith in some cosmical scheme of the universe with a pagan delight in the pure pleasure of the senses, never rose completely from the ranks of the highly endowed.

Was it, one wonders, partly due to the fact that the Italian, brought up in his ancestral home, was so firmly secured to the traditions of his country, while Hearn, born on an Ionian island of a Greek mother and an Irish father, deserted by both, only to be freshly deserted some years later by his fanatical guardian aunt because of his suspected atheism at a Jesuit school, never knew, in the entire world, a corner where he was not, in the deepest sense of the world, an alien. His subconscious sense of belonging in neither time nor space is illustrated by the fact that never once was he known to date a letter.

How natural, then, that this boy, craving the experiences of youth, and revolting against the cunning and asceticism of his teachers should turn to the French romanticists where his frustrations could be vicariously succoured, and where sophistication and wit travelled hand in hand with delicate and daring amours. Profoundly he wanted to belong, to take roots, and just as profoundly he desired to lose himself in the macabre, the exquisite, to follow to its ultimate conclusion that restless love of adventure that was always forcing its way through to his reveries.

It was certainly not in New York, where at the age of nineteen he found himself without shelter or work, nor in Cincinnati, where, after sleeping in packing boxes, acting as pedlar, waiter, printer's assistant, he was taken on as a reporter for the Cincinnati Enquirer, that he found that sophisticated group he so craved, where his curiosities could be stimulated without assaulting his sensitiveness. Was it as extraordinary as some of his critics contend that he should drift into a relationship with a mulatto girl at his cheap lodging house—a girl who showed him an exuberant kindness unknown in his wanderings? That he made every effort to marry her was characteristic of one whose sympathies were almost pathologically with the despised or oppressed, of one who could shoot four times at a man in the street for maltreating a kitten, and regret that the defective sight of his one eye allowed his victim to escape.

Disappearing from the provincial city whose reprobation had caused him acute dismay he establishes himself in New Orleans. His connexion with the Times Democrat in that city enabled him to fix, to a certain degree, his literary tastes. A unique paper, indeed, that would permit him in the course of five years to insert in its columns no less than two hundred French translations of which thirty-one were stories by de Maupassant. Here he studied with

diligent scrutiny the technique of his masters, Gautier, Flaubert (not the Flaubert of *Mme Bovary*, but of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*) Anatole France, Loti, and de Maupassant. And although his translations at that time were refused by the publishers, they helped him enormously in developing his craft. It was in the old Creole city that, after a visit to Grande Isle, Chita, still among the most popular of his works, was written. It is a *tour de force* of brilliant imagery, unparalleled of its sort in Anglo-Saxon literature. Yet how blurred by sentimentality.

In his *Two Years in the West Indies* his experiences in that luxuriant country are recorded with sensitive verisimilitude. Tinkling, tropical cadences play musingly or vertiginously over the scale of his senses. Yet slowly the vice of Spencerian mysticism settles upon his work.

He pays a flying trip in Philadelphia to a certain pious fraud called Gould (it is awful to think that he addressed him in letters as "dear Gooley") who claims to have presented him with a soul, and later, as his biographer, attacks him with a malicious fury sinuously veiled, and, stopping for a few days in New York, is finally *en route* for Japan. Here in this distant Oriental country his life crystallizes into the pattern which it was to maintain until his death. Here his two conflicting impulses, his love of the strange, and his craving for a harbourage, are fused. In this static, artless little world with its ancient rites and customs, its implications of a soul too old and civilized to seek speech, he is at rest in the secure, still "circle of himself," charmed and tranquillized, playing with his reconnoitring intellect around the outskirts of those venerable traditions which as yet had not been over-ridden or destroyed by the pressure of Western civilization. Like the little figures in Wells's *Time Machine*, almost too evolved for survival, these small stoical people move in and out of his vision following their delicate observances, according him perfect respect and courtesy, yet never challenging him to real introspection. Disarmed, entranced, he, Lafcadio Hearn, the ever suspicious, yet ever aspiring marries a little Japanese wife of impeccable goodness and establishes himself as the bread-winner of her large and ancient family. Yet how significant that in a letter to his friend Basil Chamberlain, he could recount a dream of a "gipsy dancing in the midst of a crowd;—poising, hovering, balancing, tantalizing with eyes and gestures,—and every click of the castanets went into my blood," and his in-

terest in dreams was acute, too—dreams, as he supposed, deposits of race experience. The name Freud had not come upon his horizon.

When his first son is born he weaves about him his frustrated hopes, his desire for tenderness, his vague terrors of the universe, and with passionate concentration devotes himself to the child's welfare. At last there is one who wholly depends on him, who is a potential other self, a *necessary* anchor, and he can even replace his old paeans to paganism for vague references to the value of a religious education for the young. He gives up his professorship at the Japanese University so that he can become a Japanese citizen.

Through the whole range of Lafcadio Hearn's writings one finds the same careful consideration of his craft, his feeling for words and cadences, whether in his more rococo earlier works or in those later ones where his exuberance has been hammered to an artful restraint. He is always a serious artist of the small *genre*—an artist, however, whose art is a little overbalanced by metaphysics and whose metaphysics is poisoned by a mystical morality. In reading his letters one wonders why he should have had such pious, or provincial, or rationalizing friends. How they deplored his free pagan views and welcomed as a sort of regeneration the diminishing fires of age! And why did he acclaim Stevenson and Kipling as the intellectual giants of the day?

Until his death this little modest, soft-voiced, propitiatory man, with his acute nervous perceptions, reflective intelligence, exquisite rectitude, unsatisfied libido, fierce pride, undeviating industry, and his interest in the little ghostly, delicate by-ways of life—continues the centre of a family of eleven who regard him with puzzled, uninquiring worship, and who remain to him always cryptic books sealed in dainty bindings that charm his touch, but whose leaves he is unable to turn. And one likes him to the end, the strange little man in his strange clothes in a world that remains always to the end profoundly strange to his heart.

He died on September 26th, 1904, at the age of fifty-four. Mrs Hearn with that gentle economy of phrase characteristic of her race writes thus of his death; "I advised him to lie quietly on his bed, and he did so. Very soon after that he was no longer of this world. He died without any pain having a little smile around his mouth. It could not be helped if it was the order of heaven."

ALYSE GREGORY

## THE IRISH POETIC TRADITION

DRAMATIC LEGENDS and Other Poems. By Padraic Colum. 12mo. 100 pages. The Macmillan Company.  
\$1.50.

THE Irish notion of poetry is different from that of the poets of other nations. An English poem, for example, is "simple, sensuous, passionate," one might almost add, logical: it is the consistent embodiment of an idea emotionally realized: it fills and satisfies like music. Irish poetry, on the other hand, never attempts to do what is only done for Ireland by its old national melodies: it is neither simple nor sensuous, nor is it passionate, in the total surrender of the poet's nature to the necessity of utterance. Irish poets are usually clever and versatile men, with talents for affairs and public life, and when they write they do not wear their hearts upon their sleeves, like the Keatses and Shelleys and Francis Thompsons; nor is there much risk of an Irish Mrs Hemans. They cast forth their reveries in riddles. When they write, they enter a symbolic world to which they alone possess the clue, a world in which the perennial themes of poets, love and war, doubt and faith, beauty and pride, friendship, adventure, heroism, virtue, thought, and joy, are present indeed, but as it were statically, and no longer as the motive forces which perplex, reward, and redeem men. Ireland itself is seen, not as a place in which to "make a happy fireside hame for weans and wife," but as a homeless and shifting figure; and nature is regarded as an entity aloof from mankind, imparting its secrets to the dead rather than to the living, and to mice and squirrels rather than to Plato and St Paul. The driving of Irish literature into a channel of its own, though it is in the English language, is mostly due to the remarkable genius of Mr W. B. Yeats, who, though he did not originate the spirit of modern Irish poetry—that was rather the achievement of men like Mangan and Sir Samuel Ferguson—made it self-conscious and secured it recognition. The more one looks into ancient and mediaeval Irish literature the more one feels that Yeats has divined its character, or else is the natural reincarnation of its spirit. Can such poetry possibly have a great future?

Perhaps the absence of supereminent names from such a literature will be recompensed by its continuity. English poetry shows from the start a progressive development, but it has little spiritual continuity: after Milton comes Pope, after Pope comes Blake, after Tennyson comes Kipling. A literary tradition persisting through the ages, always preserving the same mood, always adopting the same symbols, might ultimately have a weight in the spiritual councils of the world denied to prouder literatures, to which nevertheless the greatest names may belong.

Mr Colum writes in the full current of the Irish poetic tradition. Superficially, he might seem to have yielded overmuch to the Yeats influence, but a little knowledge of him shows that he is working quite independently: there is a Colum-world, clear and distinct, and interpreted by an eye far more directly conversant with the things that make up the life of the Irish folk than is Mr Yeats'. As with all poets, there are themes which are his special property, and provoke him into being himself: such a theme is the broken magnificence of ancient imagery still gleaming in the speech of some old vagrant of the roads—"as in wild earth some Grecian vase." This phrase is a quotation from Mr Colum's first volume, *Wild Earth*, and the theme holds him in one of his new poems:

"The lore she had  
Was like a kingly robe, on which long rains  
Have fallen and fallen, and parted  
The finely woven web, and have washed away  
The kingly colour, but have left some threads  
Still golden, and some feathers still as shining  
As the kingfisher's. While she sate there, not spinning,  
Not weaving anything but her own fancies,  
We ate potatoes out of the ash, and thought them  
Like golden apples out of Tiprobane."

Personally, I have found tramps and vagrants a little disappointing when I have ventured to engage them in discourse: possibly they require to be approached in the spirit of Mr Colum's world, in which they are the true aristocrats, for in that world it is their poverty and solitude which have ensured to them their inheritance.

It is no doubt due to the intimacy of Mr Colum with the life of



the people that he is one of the few poets of the "Irish Renaissance" who have achieved popularity in Ireland. It is easy to understand how he has deserved it, for his poems are the breathings of an affectionate nature. He loves the half-doors and yards of the Irish country-folk, the smell of the cows, the noise of a spade going into the ground; he knows all the routine of the Irish day; he can say a word to the children, and talk to the man of the house about his crops. He knows all the neighbours, and the people who come into the village, the old woman who keeps a toy-booth, the honey seller, the man with the hounds, the "bird-alone" old woman of the roads. In reading Colum I feel a regret that we seem to have just missed having in him that long-wanted poet who, ploughing his native soil like Robert Burns, might have put a new heart into the Irish countryside; as it is, his exile, now apparently voluntary, has given an air of wistfulness to all his moods, which keeps him within the limits of the still unbroken Irish sadness. Like Burns, Mr Colum has two manners, one, the intimate folk-manner in which he is really himself; the other, not I think so satisfactory, in which he writes much like other English and American poets of the younger school. There is another analogy in his work to that of Burns (though in pursuing it I should acknowledge that no two poets could be more really unlike than Burns and Colum): Mr Henley has shown in his famous essay how Burns had so thoroughly absorbed the folk-poetry of his country, that we can hardly distinguish between what is original in his work and what is caught out of the common folk-memory. Mr Colum's new book consists largely of adaptations from the Gaelic, and unless he had been scrupulous enough to indicate the fact in notes, we should have hardly known when the voice was not entirely his own.

Mr Colum has gone far since I first knew him in Dublin, while I was the editor of an impecunious and short-lived periodical of a somewhat serious turn. I remember how he once scribbled out in my presence a poem he had just composed, and left it with me: it was the poem now familiar to those who know Irish literature, *The Old Woman of the Roads*. "It's like a daisy!" exclaimed a friend to whom I displayed it with becoming pride: and the phrase always remains with me as the best description of a poem by Colum when he is at his best. There is no poem in this new book of his quite like a daisy. He has grown experimental and has developed some exotic



tastes; he is liable to occasional entanglements and obscurities; but on the other hand he is more varied and more melodious. The Wild Ass is a good example of his later manner:

"The wild ass lounges, legs struck out  
In vagrom unconcern:  
The tombs of Achaemenian kings  
Are for those hooves to spurn.

And all of rugged Tartary  
Lies with him on the ground,  
The Tartary that knows no awe,  
That has nor ban nor bound.

The wild horse from the herd is plucked  
To bear a saddle's weight;  
The boar is one keeps covert, and  
The wolf runs with a mate;

But he's the solitary of space,  
Curbless and unbeguiled;  
The only being that bears a heart  
Not recreant to the wild."

But I would rather have quoted a longer poem, in the series called *Reminiscence*, "It would not be far for us to go back to the age of bronze," a rare example of success with the unrhymed lyric.

If Mr Colum reads this notice I hope he will take to heart what I have said about Robert Burns!

JOHN EGLINTON

## THE HAMLET CONTROVERSY

SHAKESPEARE'S "HAMLET." By *A. Clutton-Brock*.  
16mo. 125 pages. *E. P. Dutton and Company*. \$2.

MR CLUTTON-BROCK'S book on Hamlet is an attempt to answer the theory recently put forth by Mr J. M. Robertson in his book, *The Problem of Hamlet*, and further sponsored by Mr T. S. Eliot in his collection of essays, *The Sacred Wood*. Mr Robertson believes, on the evidence of the 1603 Quarto—an earlier and much cruder text than the one we know—and of an even cruder German version of Hamlet called *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, that our own Hamlet—a post-Shakespearean combination of two texts which differ considerably from each other, the 1604 Quarto and the 1623 Folio—represents merely an unsuccessful attempt on Shakespeare's part to refine and humanize an old play by someone else; that, in fact, in the process of purging away the original barbarities of the story, Shakespeare purged away the original motive of Hamlet's delay in killing the King and has so left an unmotivated drama—or, in other words, a piece of nonsense. Mr Eliot accepts this critical foundation and rears upon it a portentous superstructure. He believes that Shakespeare used Hamlet to express certain personal emotions which had nothing to do with the situation in Denmark; and that it is for this reason that Hamlet never tells us clearly why he behaves as he does: his reactions—really Shakespeare's own reactions—are irrelevant to the play in which he finds himself; his emotion "is inexpressible because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear." He concludes that the play, "so far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, is most certainly an artistic failure."

Now I cannot agree with Mr Eliot that the critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to whose criticism he would wish us to return, had a better instinct about Hamlet than we. With their passion for the orderly and the reasonable they realized that Shakespeare's performance had fallen short of perfection; but their prosaic minds prevented them from understanding in the first place what Shakespeare was trying to present. "To speak truth," wrote

Hanmer, "our poet, by keeping too close to the groundwork of his plot, has fallen into an absurdity; there appears no reason at all in nature why this young prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave and so careless of his life." "The poet is accused," wrote Dr Johnson, "of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious." What then was Shakespeare trying to present that Dr Johnson and Hanmer missed so completely? Was it not the tragedy of the highly civilized man trying to deal with a situation to which he is superior? Hamlet was what we should call nowadays an "intellectual," with the strengths and weaknesses of the intellectual—he is also what was once called a "Romantic." Or rather, he is one of the most convincing representatives in fiction of the sort of person who has supplied both these classes. He is the clever man, the imaginative man, the idealist—the man who comes to grief in the world because he is clever enough to see through it, yet neither detached enough to stand aloof from it nor strong enough to master it. The amazing thing is that in our own day there is any one to misunderstand Hamlet. To the eighteenth century he was an anachronism; he had appeared two hundred years too early. But for the last hundred years at least we have had Hamlet night and day. When we meet him in Moon Calf or Main Street, we have no difficulty in understanding him; it is only his appearance in an Elizabethan tragedy which throws us off. Yet from the Princess Cassamassima to Three Soldiers he has become the stock hero of our fiction.

It is so that Mr Clutton-Brock sees him and tries intelligently to justify him. For Mr Clutton-Brock Hamlet is the man whose nature is

"too rich to be narrowed into a vendetta. . . . This richness is always rebelling against the narrow passion of revenge imposed upon it. He hates but with a hatred that cannot be satisfied with

any act of revenge, since it is really not so much hatred even of the King as of a beastliness in life itself which the King represents for him. That is what is meant when Hamlet is called a philosopher. It is not that he is incapable of action but that action cannot satisfy a mind shocked by life itself."

My only complaint against Mr Clutton-Brock is that he does not carry this line quite far enough. I believe that Hamlet pursued the moral problems involved in his situation even further than Mr Clutton-Brock makes him and that he was betrayed by the obverse qualities of his sensitiveness even more profoundly than Mr Clutton-Brock notes.

Hamlet's unfitness for the emergency which he has to deal with wears the double aspect of all such temperaments—very often literary, like his. On the one hand, he is too intelligent; on the other, he is too incompetent. On the one hand, his scepticism about the moral assumption upon which his obligation rests makes it impossible for him to take it quite seriously; and on the other, he is too little accustomed to dealing with the values of the vulgar world even to discharge it for the purpose of getting it over. In fact, on the one hand, as Mr Masfield says, he is "too wise" for the situation; and, on the other, as Coleridge says, in a character of Hamlet which Mr Eliot regards as a sheer irrelevant creation of Coleridge's, "in Hamlet this balance (between the real and the imaginary world) is disturbed; his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions. . . . Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action consequent upon it." Now we see a man of this sort inextricably caught in a barbarous situation; he is heir apparent to the throne of Denmark and it is more difficult for him than for any other man in the country to avoid the responsibilities imposed upon him by the tradition of the society in which he lives. Mr Eliot will claim at once that this explanation is open to the same objection as Coleridge's—that I have merely created a character of my own for which no evidence is to be found in Shakespeare. But is not this, after all, approximately what the majority of intelligent men have felt about Hamlet since the eighteenth century? Just as in Coriolanus, whom Mr Eliot recognizes and applauds, we recognize the spirit of unreasonable pride which

brings a man of action to grief by making loyalty to any group impossible, so in Hamlet we recognize the spirit of maladjusted idealism which, for example, made John Andrews such a failure as a soldier in the late war.

To Hamlet—like the voice of the past itself, the voice of tradition and authority—comes the command of his father's ghost to avenge the murder. The young man at first reacts violently and conventionally into rage against his uncle, but he expresses this rage less in imprecations than by intellectualizing it as fantastic irony. And from the very first it is made quite clear that he will never turn it directly into action. He swears that he will give up his old habit of mind and henceforth devote himself to the world of realities—

"Remember thee!

Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter . . . ."

No more books then! No more "life of the mind"! But in the very next breath he is as much an "intellectual" as ever. He has made a phrase about his father's murderer's being a "smiling, damned villain" and he at once sets it down in his note-book—"So, uncle, there you are." It is an exclamation of satisfaction and relief. We know at once that Hamlet does not really want to kill his uncle; it has been enough for his rage at the moment to have written down his ideas about the villain. But "Now to my word . . . . I have sworn't" he immediately adds, to remind himself of his obligation.

From this point, Hamlet becomes entangled in a whole network of complex reactions. The necessity for behaving like the people about him brings out his incurable difference from them. He finds himself the only civilized man in a world of fools—a world whose highest reaches of virtue and intelligence are to be found in the prosaic fidelity of Horatio and in the ideals recommended by Polonius to Laertes at the very beginning of the play. He is far more shocked by what he regards as his mother's wantonness than by the commonplace villainy of the King; and, in any case, he

draws general conclusions from both phenomena which at once advance him far beyond his neighbours as a moralist and make it impossible for him to fulfil his obligation. But for the grace of God, he reflects, he might have committed the same crimes himself! "I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious. . . . We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us." He himself has been ambitious like the King—his prolonged moodiness after his father's death has apparently been caused not only by grief for his father, but also by disappointment at not having got the throne ("He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother; Popp'd in between the election and my hopes"). And, like the Queen, he has felt himself capable of sins of lust—for when the new situation arises it is apparent that he has had dishonourable designs upon Ophelia, whom as a Prince he cannot marry. When he has recognized in himself the vices he is supposed to punish in his fellows, his rage, as Mr Clutton-Brock says, is directed against the beastliness of life itself.

He has, finally, however, succeeded in making himself take a step toward discharging his obligation. He hits upon a literary device for accusing the King: he writes his accusation into a play and causes the play to be acted before him. Then, instead of following up the King's admission of guilt with a swift and conclusive revenge, alleging a moral scruple he goes first to denounce his mother, whose sins have touched him so much more deeply than the King's. In the hysterical excitement of the interview, he kills Polonius by mistake for the King. Then his violence flags again; he allows himself to be shipped off. But now he has himself a crime to answer for. When he returns, he is slain by Laertes, who, by a perfect irony, has precisely Hamlet's motive. He, too, is avenging a father. But, unlike Hamlet, he goes straight to his task; his enraged loyalty, unlike Hamlet's, does not stop even at treachery (it is only at the very end, when it is too late, that he feels a qualm). And Hamlet only succeeds in slaying the King in the agony and outrage of his own death. In the end, the stage is left to Fortinbras, who has no doubt how to deal with realities and who has evidently never even conceived the possibility of such a being as Hamlet.

What then is the matter with Hamlet? Why has it always caused so much trouble? I believe that there is a little more justice to Mr Eliot's case than Mr Clutton-Brock gives him credit for. There certainly is something anomalous about the play: there is a real discrepancy between Hamlet's emotions and the situation in which he



finds himself; though it is not the abysmal discrepancy which Mr Eliot seems to see. I cannot agree that Hamlet is full of irrelevancies carried over from the original "intractable material"; Mr Clutton-Brock seems to me very ably to have refuted the case against the Polonius-Reynaldo and the Polonius-Laertes scenes, which Mr Eliot regards as not only "unexplained," but also as not even "beyond doubt in the style of Shakespeare" (though Mr Clutton-Brock could add that, as I have said, the latter sets the whole moral tone of the world in which Hamlet lives and would seem to be authenticated as beyond doubt in the style of Shakespeare by the fact that the speech of Polonius corresponds exactly with the advice of the Countess of Rousillon to her son in the first act of *All's Well That Ends Well*). But I do feel in the case of Hamlet, as I feel also in a minor degree in the case of Macbeth, that the hero's reactions are too sophisticated for so barbarous a situation. Shakespeare's barbarian world has less logic than his Roman world or his English world. It is much more obviously the world of a dream. In Hamlet we have a Renaissance man like Hamlet himself, a man who speaks the language and even the gossip of Shakespeare's own time, side by side with the King and Queen, who at best behave like primitive chieftains and at worst are scarcely distinguishable from the wooden figures of the old chronicles themselves. Hamlet is incredible, absurd if you like—but it is one of the most convincing things ever written. I should not dispute Mr Eliot's contention that Coriolanus and Antony And Cleopatra are much more "assured artistic successes": they stand on solid unmistakable bases and there are no gaps or superfluities in their structure. They are rigorous and sober studies of characters not enormously complex. They are unquestionably more perfect; but that does not necessarily make them greater. For one thing, in writing Hamlet, Shakespeare was attempting something much more difficult; he was trying to present a kind of man for which he could have got no models from the past. He had scarcely even the vocabulary to express the thoughts of such a man. But a sort of animus seems to have driven him to attempt it. And the result, although less objective and less completely satisfactory as fiction than the later Roman tragedies, is one of the great poems of the modern soul. At first glance we may feel ourselves put off by the antique barbarity of Denmark; but if we look again, we see ourselves.

EDMUND WILSON, JR.



## THE SNOWS OF YESTERYEAR

AGAINST THE GRAIN (A REBOURS). By J-K. Huysmans. Translated by John Howard. With an Introduction by Havelock Ellis. 8vo. 331 pages. Lieber and Lewis. \$3.

I HAVE heard that this is considered a superior translation of a celebrated book, but, as a matter of fact, it is impossible to speak of it very highly. That it must have been a labour is unquestionable, that it was a labour of love is evident, but the *liaison* between the translator and his subject is not altogether happy regarded as a work of art. The book is bound in black boards with sacerdotal gold lettering, giving something of the air of an actual breviary to a novel which has been called the Breviary of the Decadence. This intention, comprehensible in itself, is marred by the vermilion decorations on the title-page like those of a cheap children's classic, and by the too many sins of omission and commission due to the translator, or to the timidity of the publishers, or to the ineptitude of the proof-reader, or to a combination of the three. Two entire episodes, one of them that of Des Esseintes and the *gamin* Auguste are, without any real excuse, dropped from this version. Why the simple word "duke" should appear feudally arrayed in italics as "*duc*," while the word "*sangfroid*" is written as if it were English and split in two halves by a hyphen, is not obvious. More serious than these minor solecisms is the treatment accorded to whole passages such as Huysmans' expressive paragraphs on the Satyricon of Petronius. Surely Mr Howard knows that the bastard Greek names Ascyltos and Eumolpos should not appear in any respectable English translation as Ascylte and Eumolpe. It is like designating the Serpent of old Nile as Cléopatre or the Roman historian as Tite Live. In the same sentence occurs a blunder which can be explained only by the most fundamental ignorance of the subject treated or the language translated. Everyone knows that the word "*giton*" owes its very existence in the French vocabulary to the sprightliest of Petronius' male creations. In default of any gamier expression it might be rendered in English as "minion," or as some more colloquial locu-

tion, but a glance at the dictionary might have told Mr Howard that it could not possibly be traduced as "depraved little girl"! These are errors of detail, but an accumulation of such errors deepens in the reader a mistaken conviction that this book, at once recodite and a little demoded, should never have been translated at all.

Such an impression would be unfortunate. A Rebours is not only a very precious and remarkable work of criticism, but it has had a singular influence on the literary psychology of a whole generation, not only in France, but in England. This influence was directed by what might be called the second flight of French writers on a generation succeeding the Pre-Raphaelite and Swinburnian one which had in turn submitted to the delirious magic of Baudelaire. That it was caviar to the multitude and anathema to the cultured and "wholesome" majority is, after all, beside the point. Volumes continue to be written on the English Nineties, the aesthetic period which found its most conspicuous exponent in the late Oscar Wilde, and the single novel by that writer is nothing more than A Rebours diluted into the literary idiom of Oxford University. Personally, we may think The Picture of Dorian Gray very small beer, and its author one of the most overrated of minor comedians, but no less a personage than M Jean Cocteau has declared in cold print that this novel "poisoned" his youth. That the aesthetic arbiter of contemporary Paris should have been poisoned by a book which is, substantially, the Magdalen-cum-Mayfair version of another book now thirty years old, throws an interesting light on a literary aspect of our own time. It is certainly legitimate to revert to Huysmans as the original sinner, and examine the *fons et origo* of a picturesque disease which is, evidently, not yet extinct.

This malady, whether it be called aestheticism, or decadence, or *l'art pour l'art*, or the interior life, is the theme of A Rebours. Like all its author's productions, it deals with a situation, expanded to its last possibilities, not with the developments arising from a situation, and it has only one character.

The Duc des Esseintes is the last representative of his race. At the age of thirty he has simplified his philosophy into a complete detestation of his fellow-men. In such a case there is, there can be, no novel, for a novel implies action and conflict arising from desire, and Des Esseintes is empty of desire since he is deprived of all vitality save a febrile loathing for mankind. Nevertheless he is not in-

capable of loving. He loves art—that is, the art of other men and other ages—but even this aesthetic passion is infected by his disease. In the first chapter, he retires to an hermetical house in a desolate suburb where he gives himself up to a kind of ghastly aestheticism, amused by a mouth-orchestra composed of liquors, a concert consisting of perfumes, a mechanical landscape, and a mock sea. He buys a tortoise and incrusts its shell with a sheet of gold and jewels, but the unfortunate animal, accustomed to a quiet life, succumbs under its rutilant cope and dies overnight. The Duke's bedroom is in white and violet like a monk's cell, and on the lectern of old iron is a splendidly illuminated altar-canon containing Baudelaire's prose poem: *Anywhere Out of the World*.

All this seems dangerously close to satire, conscious or unconscious, and satire of a rather macabre sort is by no means lacking in Huysmans. There are passages in the book which suggest the voluptuary in *Punch*: "To rise, to take a little opium, to sleep till lunch, and after again to take a little opium, and sleep till dinner, that is pleasure!" The deliberate extravagance with which it is inlaid found immediate and perfervid admirers, particularly in England. Compton Mackenzie has a story of an Oxford undergraduate, afterwards a hard-working curate in a slum mission, who decided to go *Des Esseintes* one better, and appeared on the High Street leading a lobster on a silver chain. If the book had been merely an inspiration for sophomoric fantasies of this sort (among which we should certainly include Mr Wilde's novel) it need hardly have been resurrected in English after all these years. Its art, its philosophy, identical with those of its illustrious and unhappy writer, are so much more important than any incidentally grotesque symbols of blue china or gilded tortoises, that they are worth a moment's thought.

"Decadence," we are reminded by Mr Havelock Ellis in a wonderfully penetrating study of Huysmans, "is simply an attitude toward life and art. Technically speaking, a decadent style is only such in relation to a classic style." In short, there can be no Act of Uniformity applied to the dominion of art. A decadent art has only the remotest relation to morality. The classic herring of Horace cannot pretend any moral superiority to the decadent bloater of Huysmans; and despite the enervating harmonies of Debussy, there is nothing specifically immoral in employing the whole-tone scale.

Is there, however, a sense in which the decadence of Huysmans,

merging, as it ultimately did merge, into an extreme Christian individualism, can be called immoral? Doubtless, if an aberration of the nervous system, consciously willed and enjoyed, can be considered immoral. Pagan art, the art which can properly be called classic, knew nothing of the morose delectation with which the Huysmanses of this work regard beauty. It has always dealt with candid, sunny tones and elemental things; it has not shrunk from or despised what Mr Ellis finely calls "the adorable mystery of common life and the human love" which are commonplace only to the anaemic. The extreme romanticist, everyone who wishes "to escape from life," rejects these things because he is at once insufficient and afraid. Artist and mystic, agnostic and believer, they are at one in the common sentiment that they deny and hate the world. "*Tu connais cette maladie fiévreuse qui s'empare de nous dans les froides misères, cette nostalgie du pays qu'on ignore. . . .*" There is a country made in your image, where all is beautiful, rich, quiet and honest, where life is sweet to breathe, where happiness is wedded to silence. It is there that we should live, it is there that we should die." How perfect is the identity between people like Huysmans and Baudelaire in the cold squalor of *garnis*, amid the wet detritus of dead seasons, and the mediaeval mystic, *super flumina Babylonis*, longing for "the happy city, the celestial vision of peace." All his life, Huysmans was tortured by a longing (it is the reason and secret of his art) for "a real country of Cockaigne, where all is beautiful, clean and shining like a clear conscience . . . a singular country excelling others as art excels nature." Tormented and unhappy, he wandered through a world that was like an obscure wood, a forest bristling with differences, and when he came to his senses he had, in some unknown fashion, reached sanctuary, and found himself in a church.

"In this atmosphere it was good to live; far off, where slower hours contain more thoughts, where clocks strike happiness with a deeper and more significant solemnity."

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

## UTOPIA REVISITED

THE STORY OF UTOPIAS. By *Lewis Mumford*. 8vo.  
315 pages. Boni and Liveright. \$3.

THE Utopia of Lewis Mumford takes the form of a fresh examination of the utopias of others, in much the same way that philosophers launch themselves from re-examination of anterior systems. By design it is a criticism of man's collective life in terms of his inveterate dreaming about the good life. If this seem to license the critic to roam the void for his values, "Nowhere," says Mr Mumford, "may be an imaginary country, but News from Nowhere is real news." So he takes the whole universe of utopia for his province, and it proves not so vast after all.

That firmament of perfection rings him round as he stands on the present as on the shoulder of a mountain, preparing to make his own map about the major topography of the historic past spread out below. Cities builded by no hand hover on the horizon that confines both present and past, and he knows that each is no more, and no less, than a mirage flung up from some quarter of the terrain. With Professor Robinson, cartographer of Mind in the Making, he recognizes that all such images of reality properly belong on the map; that they are, indeed, the very legends without which it would be next to unintelligible. Mr Mumford's name for these legends is *idóla*. Now, if we can ever decipher all of man's idola and relate them to their generating and generated actualities, we shall have the one really significant history of man. Professor Robinson's map of the developing mind and Mr Mumford's map of utopia are, of course, only two plates toward that atlas, but we shall be luckier than we deserve if they are superseded in our time.

Twenty-three hundred years of interaction between man's social polity and his idola get reinterpreted and re-evaluated in Mr Mumford's chart of selection and emphasis, until the void of Nowhere through which we approached Plato has become, when we leave Wells, a notably integrated cosmos of the heart's desire—a land with a constitution, a history, and a future. We are as familiar with its virtues and defects, liberties and compulsions, practicable

and impracticable institutions as with those of any foreign nation in which we have travelled: the map of utopia works.

Thanks, primarily, to its scale. Man is the measure of this utopian universe—man in his passionate, restricted, aspiring reality. The guardian angels of Plato's sunlit Republic turn out to be good Americans: their function is "to manufacture liberty"—and censor art. If the fanatical utopianism of the Middle Age all but fades from the map, it is because those cities are of God, not of men; Mr Mumford will not have our common clay eclipsed by pearly gates and walls of jasper. The farmers who cultivate More's island of Utopia enslave their criminals, which permits them to take their "natural pleasure" in an "uncommonly good club" in Amaurat, a town as like every other town on the island as American cities are alike. Across a narrow channel lies Andreae's Christianopolis, a city of fine workshops, comfortable apartment houses—and compulsory chapel. When your eyes tire of these thrifty neighbourhoods, look under the equator, where Fra Tomasso Campanella compensated himself for the austerity of his vows by building a blazing City of the Sun and nationalizing women, or where Francis Bacon established in the New Atlantis a glittering but useless Salomon Foundation. Do your eyes dazzle? Turn them this way on the Iron Age. Towns with the names of Pullman cars—Victoria, Spensonia, Edendale, Icara (capital of Icaria, founded by old man Icar)—celebrate the triumphs of the new freedom: universal service in overalls, large-scale production of human buttons and iron buttonholes, the Australian ballot, Prohibition. The future? How about our little old U. S. A. in the year 2000, with its Great Trust, its Labor Army, its "alumni control" by a General Staff of ex-hazers, its universal broadcasting of news and sermons. The place name of this perfect flower of propaganda is—Looking Backward.

Must you go so soon? Here are three exits: W. H. Hudson holds the door marked Crystal Age; you look over fresh fields to a charming country house, wherein a matriarchal queen bee monopolizes the reproduction of the human species, and rebellious sex is "released" by euthanasia. William Morris swings open the gate to Nowhere, the smiling Thames valley where no London grins; and here men are men, women are women—but artists are all craftsmen, craftsmen all artists. H. G. Wells pulls back the grating to his express elevator Modern Utopia, which will whisk



you to a metropolitan planet as tidy as a hospital—after you have registered your thumb print that the International State may keep track of you at every moment. Select the exit nearest your heart and walk (do not run) to that exit.

The solid citizen, of course, has long since retreated into *The Here and The Now*, those twin cities of refuge behind high tariff walls against ideas. But Mr Mumford has put them on the map too. I can only acknowledge, I cannot hope to convey, the glowing virtuosity with which he represents the contemporary scene under its dominant idola, criticizing them as if they already existed in utopian literature, as now they do. His *Country House*, of which the *Abbey of Theleme* is the blue print and *Heartbreak House* the realization, is the castle out of work and living "the goods life"—its liberty cloying leisure, its law passive taste, its style derivative and capricious, its function to consume insatiably and never produce. It created and now snubs a *Frankenstein's* golem that produces interminably but cannot consume—*Coketown*, monster of stacks and dumps. *Liaison* between them is the function of *Megalopolis*, a vertical filing case of a city, where "the religious care of paper" is the chief end of man and where the policing myth of the National State is "perpetually willed into existence." But let no reformer or radical exult till he have examined another corner of Mr Mumford's map (more loosely drawn, I confess) where the partisan utopias of the ismist are labeled fetishes—arbitrary segments of life masquerading as the human whole, each laying claim to all the driving and lifting power generated by the whole.

Indeed, every line of the map shouts that whether the utopia be of "escape" or of "reconstruction," the one thing man cannot escape is Man—the whole man, creator and consumer. The escapes into creation are unanimously sumptuary, and the good life of consumption invariably coerces or censors creation. As to what must be reconstructed in utopia there is general agreement on only a few essentials: common possession of the land and of natural resources, work of some kind for all, some sort of eugenics. To these Mr Mumford appends his conviction that any humane society will drop such dogmas as the National State and the Proletariate—an inconsiderable apostasy, by the way, beside the Renaissance secession from the City of God. For the rest, "in the Kingdom of Eutopia," he quotes Patrick Geddes, "there will be many mansions."

Of the Mumford Mansion (when, as, and if it shall be built) the site is indicated—an eminence with a wide view—and the style is determined—the spacious, flowing humanism that sings a perpetual duet with nature. Little of the exotic Country House here, and nothing of the Coketown tenement; definitively a dwelling, a home in which to live, work, and take your ease at sundown. Though no exact plans have been drafted, some indispensable materials are specified.

The two most important, unhappily, have been more closely studied in their historical developments than in their processes: certain formulæ for science and art bear a suspicious resemblance to vest-pocket recipes for home brew. Mr Mumford thirsts after "synthesis," and it is nectar; but the merely synthetic, alas, is something else again. Science—so progressively departmentalized since Aristotle that the common man embraces superstition "as a more easily apprehended version of reality" (as he did before)—and art—since the Renaissance so increasingly deprived of "social destination" that "art for the artist's sake" has left the common man nothing but the "second best"—must not only undergo "reorientation"; they must somehow achieve a "synthesis of intellect and emotion." Synthetic humanism! The scientist, who is doing his utmost to be lucid, knows that any "more easily apprehended version" of science will probably be superstition, and the artist sees ample destination accorded the third best of art-for-the-academy's-sake. The good society must, of course, make the humanest possible use of the findings of science and of works of art; but if it attempt to use the scientists and artists themselves under any "definite hierarchy of human values" other than disinterested inquiry and unconcerned expression, it will realize pseudo-science, propagandist art—and rebellion.

Finally, was it the "neurotic individualism" of artists that drove them from the modern world? Or are they neurotic individualists (when they are) because that world has banished them? The miracle is that after all the slings and arrows of outrageous democracy the artist still rushes to meet any honestly appreciative tender of an humane occasion. Give *his* human value free play, and the stone that the builders of Coketown rejected can be the cornerstone of utopia. Utopia—it is the land of his exile!

CLARENCE BRITTEN

## BRIEFER MENTION

**KANGA CREEK: AN AUSTRALIAN IDYLL**, by Havelock Ellis (12mo, 68 pages; Golden Cockerel Press: \$1.60) contains no taint of vicarious fulfilment on the part of its author, the adventurous and seasoned humanist whose steady intelligence now adds a brief conquest in fiction to its distinctions in philosophy, political and social analysis, literary criticism, and science. His exhaustive research in sexual psychology led to an idyllic innocence which still takes account of all the facts—a unique attitude toward sex in our age. And it is this grasp of sex as essentially idyllic which contributes so much charm to this fictional study of the fluctuating adolescent battle between shyness, pride, self-abasement, and the mental and sexual expansions of manhood. The theme is developed by a man who knows how to create structure: witness the mood of alertness induced by the protagonist's watchfulness for snakes just prior to meeting the major girl character.

**THE REIGN OF THE EVIL ONE**, by C. F. Ramuz (12mo, 195 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2) is a fantastic and somewhat mystical, i. e., not altogether clear, tale of Swiss peasant life laid in a picturesque valley of the Alps. Its theme, doubtlessly woven from some ancient legend into a modern setting, can be briefly summarized as follows: a peaceful village—advent of evil, symbolized by The Stranger—plague, strife and crime—moral regeneration. Although its *mise en scène* is clear and its characters human, one is apt to speculate after reading this book on the author's reason for writing it. It seems to draw no conclusion and to have no central idea.

**TALES OF THE JAZZ AGE**, by F. Scott Fitzgerald (12mo, 317 pages; Scribners: \$1.75) is an exhibit of cleverness in the technique of salesmanship rather than in the technique of fiction. The two are sometimes confused by those critics who speak of the perfect technique of the American short story. Salesmanship begins with the art-to-conceal-art dictum and proceeds to smother technical functions, emotion, and thought in those informal draperies which sell so well to the public which takes its fiction as relaxation. In his fourth book, Mr Fitzgerald still sticks this side of paradise: far from eliminating the dross in his first book, he is actually exploiting it as though it were literary as well as gold specie.

**A HISTORY OF FRENCH LITERATURE**, by William A. Nitze and E. Preston Dargan (illus., 8vo, 781 pages; Holt: \$5) is a work which for general breadth of design and minuteness of detail compares very favourably with Lanson's architectural monument to Gallic letters. It is to be queried, however, whether of the two courses open to literary historians Taine did not once and for all choose the better path: if he permitted some smaller English fry to slip through his historical net, he at any rate let no whales escape him. And Messrs Nitze and Dargan, though hauling in every French writer of note have, by fishing up so many minnows, diverted attention from the real monsters of their sea.

**MORE AUTHORS AND I**, by C. Lewis Hind (12mo, 302 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2.50) as might be expected from the title, contains more I than authors. Mr Hind is a past master at the art of gossiping and can probably hold his own at the most strenuous of teas. But he is altogether too garrulous, too essentially uncritical, and what passes at first for kindly warmth and geniality becomes extremely irritating before the reader has drifted through many pages. He brings the same sweetness and light to bear upon such diverse characters as Rabindranath Tagore and Alfred Noyes, George Eliot and Clement Wood, with no differentiation of values.

**WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS**, by Delmar Gross Cooke (12mo, 279 pages; Dutton: \$3). Any effort to rehabilitate Howells' reputation as a novelist deserves our gratitude. Hence Mr Cooke's determination is admirable. He is no special pleader. His "critical study" is sympathetic but honest. He has evidently closeted himself with Howells through hundreds of laborious days and nights. But he has wandered too long in academic groves. Somehow in the heat of the chase, the grace and charm and warm humanity of Howells evaded him. His book is alive—almost.

**THE WORLD IN FALSEFACE**, by George Jean Nathan (12mo, 326 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) is a motley collection of digressions on the theatre, art, women, and other things, with a foreword in the best Nathan imitation of George Moore, vintage at least a quarter century old. George Jean as an Olympian with a mild stogie in his mouth is a trifle disconcerting. Nevertheless, he is nothing if not clever.

**SIDELIGHTS ON AMERICAN LITERATURE**, by Fred Lewis Pattee (8vo, 342 pages; Century: \$2). This book is hailed as one containing unlaboured judgements. Professor Pattee's essay called *The Modernness of Philip Freneau* is suggestive, but it is so ineptly presented that whatever value it has is rendered thereby wholly nugatory. On Poe and Longfellow the author is nearer his own native acre. Even here he disengages no novel or stimulating point of view, but he is at least intelligible and one can go along with him some distance. When he comes to treat of modern writers, Professor Pattee is completely at sea, and with an unmanageable wheel to boot. In *The Age of O. Henry* the author falls into an astonishing error, namely that because the popular commercial short story writer is a servile imitator of O. Henry, O. Henry is therefore influencing the sound creative writers of the present. No one with any critical taste, it is necessary to point out to Professor Pattee, really thinks of O. Henry as a great writer. What others think, does not matter. His chapter on Mencken occasionally unmasks the truth about our swashbuckling critic, but it is spoiled by quotations from Mencken's adolescent volume, *Ventures in Verse*, which he calls "good work" and "highly original." For him Bernard Shaw is "windy, cocksure, iconoclastic"—nothing more; Nietzsche is merely the "devil's Messiah, the prophet Nietzsche, of the German Empire that was." The prose should really be looked into by a competent board of examiners. It is honeycombed with absurdities like "The phosphorus of it [the "obsession" of "contemporaneousness"] eats into the bones and turns all the sky to mucus."

**JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU**, by Henri-Frédéric Amiel, translated by Van Wyck Brooks (12mo, 94 pages; Huebsch: \$1) is a welcome specimen of Amiel's generally neglected literary criticism, the phase of Amiel that Matthew Arnold regretted did not develop into his central vocation. Amiel observes that "clairvoyance and neutrality" are necessary virtues for a critic, and he indeed exemplifies them in his brief account of Rousseau's life, character, works, and influence; while his sympathy for Rousseau warms his record into a fitting centennial discourse. The thorough critic, however, must work through neutrality to a decision, not a sympathy. The force that is Rousseau has been mounting on a grandiose *crescendo* of romanticism, volitionalism, and expressionism; an opposing cycle in which Arnold is an important structure is rising to meet it; the impending conflict compels decision. Consequently, Amiel's "enumeration of the positive claims of the Genevese philosopher" has a very timely interest.

**WALDO FRANK: A STUDY**, by Gorham B. Munson, photograph by Alfred Stieglitz (12mo, 95 pages; Liveright: \$1) undertakes, in a form which very nearly approaches that of a narrative, to trace the gradual merger between a temperament and a medium. This method leads to a treatment of Frank almost exclusively in his own terms: his matter and technique, that is, are translated into their ideological parallel. As a consequence, the work will serve mainly as a Baedeker to a more accurate understanding of Frank's programme; and if, when it is all over, we discover that Mr Munson has given us less of a criticism than a sales talk, we also discover that in revenge he has succeeded quite convincingly in "putting across" his commodity.

**A PUSH CART AT THE CURB**, by John Dos Passos (12mo, 216 pages; Doran: \$1.50). Exoticism. Romance. Decoration. The poet thirsts unquenchably after beauty and local colour, pursuing them through Andalusia and Castile, Manhattan Island, Asia Minor, and on the left bank of the Seine. Sometimes he approaches . . . stretches out his arms vainly . . . is left clinging to a patch of the torn skirt of beauty; maybe also with a taste in his mouth. He weaves his adventures into a sort of Persian carpet, boldly coloured with ochre, carmine, turquoise, emerald, and bearing the conventional design of a poet in search of beauty . . . If Dos Passos is less of a poet than a novelist, it does not follow that he is a negligible poet.

**CHINESE WHITE**, by Gladys Oaks, illustrated by William Gropper (4to, 24 pages; Melomime Publications: \$1.50) contains eight lyrics by a hand not unsuited to nursery rhymes, but inappropriately directed by a mind which is unconsciously and not deliberately silly. The accompanying black-and-whites by Gropper again demonstrate him to be an illustrator of pleasant tricks. He understands simplification and the more obvious relationships: often, however, he gets no movement when motion is needed. But after air-sickness induced by a flight through "sounds, sounds, sounds" until the singer's nerves "part, snap" and she feels her soul "twist and roll, swerve and roll," it is stabilizing to land on Mr Gropper's immovable lady anchored by a heavy harp.



**EIGHT MORE HARVARD POETS**, edited by S. Foster Damon and Robert Silliman Hillyer (12mo, 130 pages; Brentano: \$1.50) is a volume which, with one brilliant exception, falls greatly below the earlier Harvard anthology. It is Malcolm Cowley who will run ahead of his ticket. His poems are the work of a man keen on the formal elements of writing; with the result that, in addition to their cautious line-for-line texture, they manifest a functional relationship between the parts, a sense of the beauty in balancing movement with counter-movement. There is other solid work in the volume (more notably that of John Brooks Wheelwright and Grant Code) but on the whole one must bow before that unpleasant person who would call the book *Too Many More Harvard Poets*.

**POEMS OF THE SOIL AND SEA**, by Charles Wagner (12mo, 62 pages; Knopf: \$1.50). These poems ring the changes on the eternal themes of love, beauty, nature, and death. Though characterized by fluency and delicacy of expression, they fail to hit a distinctive, individual note. Contrary to the implication of the title, the verse is redolent of neither brown earth or salt spray. Nor does he open new or strange vistas. Here is no new or compelling voice to startle attention. Now and then, a thin vein of irony is disclosed. Intensive mining might reveal richer ore.

**IN MEMORIAM**, by Martin Feinstein (12mo, 62 pages; Seltzer: \$1.25) is an unusual first book of verse for these ebb-tide days of the much-touted renaissance in American poetry. It would be unusual if it contained no piece of writing other than the title poem, an elegy in easy American rhythms for "Ike and the nigger and Jones" who were hurled into the stew civilization brewed for them. That the editors of *The Nation* should have chosen this poem for their annual prize is distinctly to their credit. Mr Feinstein's other work more than justifies their confidence.

**FINDERS**, by John V. A. Weaver (12mo, 83 pages; Knopf: \$1.50). In this collection of "more poems in American" Mr Weaver still relies on his one divine invention: that of trying to compensate for his sentimentality by couching said sentimentality in bad English. One stickles at the bad English until one turns to a "serious" poem, and then for the first time one realizes what a godsend the bad English really is. Thus does the author provide his own relief. Mr Weaver's *strength* is like that of a Robert W. Service with the painted ladies left out.

**GRANITE AND ALABASTER**, by Raymond Holden (12mo, 130 pages; Macmillan: \$1.25). All discussions of form land eventually in content, and all discussions of content arrive finally at the writer's personality. In the case of neutral work, one is compelled to start at the wrong end, and by considering the personality explain the vacuum. Mr Holden is serious and sincere, but he achieves none of the clarities and surprises which occur when an intellect operates at the tips of the senses. The majority of his poems are "nature" poems: the absence of direct feeling and the substitution of received ideas deaden his many observations (not perceptions) of country life. Inevitably, he commits *clichés* and packs his lines but loosely with meaning.



**IN A BOOK OF PLAYS**, by Witter Bynner (12mo, 255 pages; Knopf: \$2.50)

Mr Bynner submits himself to an intelligence test provided by Aristotle, and quite convincingly shows that one may be a successful lyricist upon a minimum of intelligence. For of Plot, Character, Thought—all the work of the intellect—there is tiny evidence in his plays. Either the emotions exceed the facts, or *vice versa*, thus locating Mr Bynner in sentimental melodrama. It is this lack of a perceiving, defining and constructing power which accounts for the inflexible diction—a smooth oily purr in spite of vocabulary changes. In the version of Iphigenia in Tauris, prepared for Isadora Duncan, Euripides supplies the intelligence and Mr Bynner evinces a pleasing superiority to Gilbert Murray.

**THREE PLAYS: THE DOVER ROAD, THE TRUTH ABOUT BLAYDS, THE GREAT BROXOPP**, by A. A. Milne (12mo, 295 pages; Putnam: \$2).

The desperate need of the theatre for new forms gets no alleviation from Mr Milne, deft craftsman and super-suburbanite. He uses standard forms and standard content, injecting inessential oddities into the latter as an excuse for writing. His plays are not absurd enough to create their own worlds, nor profound enough to criticize life. He does not have an excellent understanding of suburban risibilities—often indeed holding up his design to manipulate them, but suburban humour is a softening agent, a means to justify mediocre living, an effort to blur distinctions. It is entertainment of low vitality, and its grip on the proper theatre explains partly the vogue of vaudeville and other entertainment of high vitality.

**EAST OF SUEZ**, by W. Somerset Maugham (12mo, 138 pages; Doran: \$1.25).

The great dramatist invents or steals good situations in order to fill them with great speeches. Mr Maugham contrives dramatic situations and then flats them by crude or feeble dialogue, noting however in the stage directions that his character was "excessively distressed" or "feels helpless and strangely weak." The framework is a string of seven scenes: the theme is the reclamation by China of an Eurasian girl whose single violent passion for a vacillating white man drives her to suicide. Both suggest a comparison with Emperor Jones, from which one gets a keener realization of the organic defects in East of Suez.

**WHAT PROHIBITION HAS DONE TO AMERICA**, by Fabian Franklin (12mo, 129 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$1) is a sober legalistic argument against the Eighteenth Amendment and its consequences. It begins with the undisputed fact that prohibition is a denial of personal liberty and maintains that the Eighteenth Amendment perverted a Constitution hitherto existent for the purpose of safeguarding liberty into a mechanism for safeguarding the denial of liberty. This violation has created millions of lawbreakers, invaded States' Rights, and may even be, Mr Franklin imagines, a breach for his horrible cartoon of socialism as complete regimentation. It takes no master, however, to contrive superior dialectics to the Prohibitionists, while Mr Franklin's blindness to the Constitution as the document of an idealism victimized by economic interest makes his reverence for it naïve. The drink question is not fundamentally legal, but psychological; what is needed is an expert analysis of the ugly obsession-neurosis prohibition has created.

## COMMENT

WE have received the following illuminating communication:

"Suppose that one could discover America not by returning to it, but by sailing away from it. I do not underestimate the discoveries made by those who have had the good fortune to spend a year abroad and to find, on their return, that it is as well for a man not to be wholly uprooted and that whatever our background may be, it is ours for better and for worse. One must be either a philosopher or a genius to know that without learning it, and as it is a knowledge particularly useful to young men, the journey away from home is worth the price. It is difficult to appreciate one's own country during one of those periods of patriotism which come regularly over the civilized world—those periods which make it superfluous to say 'false patriotism' and make 100% the symbol of that perfect whole which Plato held the end of a divine love.

"Separation without the pathos of distance and without homesickness is the priceless advantage you have ten minutes after the ship casts away; it is the moment when you can love your country without wishing to be immediately taken up again into its life. So viewed, America repudiates the Emersonian epigram as wholly as it withstands the curses of the *émigrés*. If America merely meant opportunity in the narrow sense now given to the words, it would really mean the benighted barbarism which, one heard last year from the Café de la Rotonde, marks the return of the Dark Ages. Opportunity in that sense means chaos, and although chaos is still possible in America, it is less dearly bought than the foreign product of the same grade and quality. Where the arts are concerned it has always been understood that America did not mean opportunity because it failed to provide the social framework, the tradition, the whole sense of life favourable to the creative activity; and with this has always gone the second article of faith, that America would not pay for whatever art work America produced.

"The plunge into the vague immensity of Europe immediately diminishes the size of America and makes it amenable; far more than that, you become aware for the first time of the *certainly* of America, its safeness and trustworthiness. For an American, to be

sure. I met, five years ago, an Australian who was going "Home"—to London which he had never seen—and his emotions about America might legitimately have differed from mine. But for me, *Americano*, the sense of security in my country passes beyond the recognition that it is the only major nation to have still a more than fighting chance of physical well-being. It may be comparatively trivial to feel that your country is *safe*, but the 'fabric of society' which provides the artist with his sense of life exists by that assurance. It is only a safe society that can become an intelligent and sophisticated one, and it is only a comparatively simple and healthy one which can be safe.

"A writer or painter who has never felt himself outside the European artistic tradition has now the incalculable advantage of being associated with a social and political tradition which is not falling to pieces. It is meagre and a little uninteresting; it has its stupidities and some aspects are madly incongruous; it is not yet solid. But it is composed of the material from which civilizations are made, and they are so far incorruptible. When we are oppressed with our present worries we feel certain that our halcyon days were in the proconsulship of Garfield and Arthur; but we cannot push the analogy very far, for the Heliogabalian portents simply do not occur. The energy we exploit is still under control and we have shoddy Latin Quarters because we haven't a real classical age to turn from. We have just enough of a past to fall back on and more than enough strength to go on with.

"The one thing we haven't is continuity. It isn't possible to remember while one is in the Loop or in Wall Street that ours is the country of the Abolitionists and the Free Silverites and the German Forty-eighters and the pioneer Forty-niners; the interaction of pioneer and emigrant remains a thesis-subject, not a relation present in living memory. One may find to-day a noted New England name in the anti-lynching crusade and be shocked to remember that the same name was known in 1850 in favour of Free Soil; shocked because anything which carries over from generation to generation is largely foreign to us.

"I do not know how this feeling of a continuous American life which no inflow of foreigners can disrupt will ever become common—although I am sure that to be useful to the artist it must be common. It is possible that we must go on another hundred years before we begin to be aware of the Revolution, and perhaps a

thousand before our connexion with European culture ceases to bore or frighten us. I should fancy that our creative artists will do more for us in this matter—and not by writing costume novels or painting Washington Crossing the Delaware—than our business men or those moving pictures which prove to us that historically America is largely Anglo-Saxon and entirely anti-Bolshevist. For it is not an interest in the past that is chiefly wanted, but a recognition of the past in the present.

"The terrible thing is that if any part of this be true, the position of our artists is bettered, but their power is more than ever questioned. We haven't as a nation cared a hang for them, and the fact that they must keep alive, and had better keep alive without trying to work for money, we haven't at all faced. One doesn't at this date feel that Whistler and James let us down by going abroad, nor does one recall all the details of Poe's life with actual pride in the America of before the Civil War. But one isn't so sure that the unhappiness of hundreds of our creative artists hasn't been as much due to their feeling of impotence as to their lack of contact with the favourable environment. If Whitman could create a past and a nation to which he could relate himself, why could not another? If our artists, in short, haven't fulfilled themselves, haven't we given them too many excuses for failure?

"Haven't we, anyhow, taken away the last excuse for failure now? If the world is going to damnation, we are going more slowly than others; among the great nations it is quite probable that Russia alone has as much material and perhaps China as much solidity, as we have. Neither of these things makes it possible for us to produce a *Recherche du Temps Perdu*—but it happens that that sort of *Recherche* is not the one which most of our artists care about, and it is part of their work to discover exactly what they do care for. If what they want to do has relevance to the American situation, they have the benefit of being not cut off from the European—and that for example is all one ever needs to say about James. If it has to do with America it will not be easy. But the fact that America isn't favourable to it is, I should say, quite secondary. You see that arrogance is the first thing one experiences in looking back."

It impresses us as a most mystical argument; but we are always interested in young America, so we print it.

## THE THEATRE

TO say that the Moscow Art Theatre is "naturalistic" is likely to be misleading. Since the advent in the theatre of Expressionism we have come to make a sort of bugbear of naturalism and to associate it with everything that is prosaic, laboured, and dreary in the drama. We think, at least, of *Hindle Wakes* and *The Weavers* and all the drama of the proletariat and the middle class which corresponded to the novel of Arnold Bennett and Zola and Dreiser. But the Art Theatre represents something different from this: it represents the higher reaches of the realistic movement. It constitutes perhaps the only successful attempt to put on the stage the aesthetic ideal, not of the men I have mentioned, but of the school which produced Flaubert and Turgenev, Anatole France and Henry James—that is, of the school which went beyond notation and merely conveying the impression of life and, accepting the convention of plausibility, aimed to produce not merely something real, but something beautiful—something valid as art.

It is this extremely difficult formula which the Russians have brought to perfection in the theatre. They are as subtle, as selective, as full of glamour as any of the great novelists whom I have mentioned above. They present a surface so perfectly convincing as realism that we can scarcely believe when we leave the theatre that we have not been actual visitors in a Russian household and stood watching the family go about its business; but at the same time they bring out a whole set of aesthetic values to which we are not accustomed in the realistic theatre: the beauty and poignancy of an atmosphere, of an idea, a person, a moment are caught and put before us without emphasis, without anything which we recognize as theatrical, but with the brightness of the highest art. In *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*, for example—not only is a whole complex of social relations presented with the most convincing exactitude, but *THE CHERRY ORCHARD* itself, the sort of beauty which Mme Ranevskaya represents, the charm which hangs about the Russian gentry even in decay is somehow put upon the stage in such a way that their futility is never dreary, but moving, their ineptitude touched with the tragedy of all human failure.

It is true that the Art Theatre sometimes appears a little too har-

monious and smooth. One feels that life is a little more violent and surprising than anything to be seen on their stage—even in Gorky's *THE LOWER DEPTHS*; but it seems to be inevitable for this form of art to eliminate the violent and the surprising. There are no earthquakes in Henry James; nor do any accidents occur in Flaubert. It is an art of underemphasis and deliberately unfolded effects.

By the time these notes appear both *HAMLET* and *ROMEO AND JULIET* will be off, but it is perhaps worth while to say something in general about Mr Arthur Hopkins' productions of Shakespeare. We have now had four of these and they have on the whole been pretty bad. The trouble is that Mr Hopkins is not a producer. He has the taste to select plays and the courage to put them on, but not the sort of genius to make anything of them. He seems to expect them to produce themselves. You have the feeling that there has been no unifying force at work to dominate the material at his disposal—that Mr Jones has been allowed to follow his own vagaries and the Barrymores theirs and the rest of the members of the cast to do pretty much as they please. There appears to be no coherent, concerted idea as to what any given play is about.

In so far as these productions are impressed with any consistent character which is identifiable as Mr Hopkins', it is a tendency toward the natural, the casual—the sort of thing which was so charming and so refreshing when we first had it in the Clare Kummer comedies, but which is hopelessly inappropriate to Shakespeare. After all, Shakespeare is poetic drama and should be acted like poetic drama, not like a naturalistic tragedy by Galsworthy. There is an element of declamation in Shakespeare which has to be recognized and allowed for; it requires a different convention from Clare Kummer. But Mr Hopkins tries to pare down Hamlet till it sounds like the *staccato* dialogue of *LOYALTIES*. He has accomplished the depressing feat of completely divesting Shakespeare of music. The tremendous rhythm of English blank verse has given place to a colloquial flatness. Mr Winthrop Ames, in *WILL SHAKESPEARE*, has produced the inferior blank verse of Clemence Dane so that it is actually a great deal more effective than Hopkins' version of the greatest blank verse ever written. In *WILL SHAKESPEARE* the rhythm pervades the whole performance; the speakers catch it from each other. In *ROMEO AND JULIET* it is broken into a thousand bits.

EDMUND WILSON, JR.



## MODERN ART

**T**OULOUSE-LAUTREC, Félicien Rops, Constantin Guys could not have lived in this country. You will not have heard their names perhaps? Degas could not have lived in this country. Ah, that gets you! I wonder why. Because of the price? A Degas once brought a huge sum in a Paris auction; eighty thousand dollars or something like that. But Degas was a bad lot, I assure you. He could not possibly have belonged to our Sunday School class as a young man and when he grew up he painted pictures of a kind of woman who is never glowingly described in any literature we get a chance at except the Bible and who never really received a square deal since history began to be recorded save at the hands of the First Christian of them all.

Only to-day I was looking at a photograph of Degas' witty monotype, *La Fête de la Patronne*, and instead of moaning that such things could be or rather that such things could be painted, I suddenly found myself laughing heartily and saying to myself, "I wonder what Mr Tripp would say to that!" Mr Tripp is the New Bedford public librarian who has banished *THE DIAL* from his library because he thinks *THE DIAL*'s illustrations constitute a danger for the young. Mr Tripp, I fancy, is one of those riotously imaginous persons who sees things he shouldn't in nudes, even in "good" nudes. What would he not do and say were he informed that there were such things as "bad" nudes in art, and that art had sanctified the badness out of them! What would he not do if he saw the things of Toulouse-Lautrec, Félicien Rops, Constantin Guys, or even those of Jules Pascin now viewable in the Brummer Galleries and which inspire this article? He would probably die. Theoretically he ought to die, if he actually was shocked by past *DIAL* drawings. And when he gets to Heaven he will meet face to face the Individual who took such a very different view of things during His short sojourn on earth, from Mr Tripp. What a curious encounter that will be!

Then only, of course, will Mr Tripp become educated in art. On earth it is not for him. I don't know that I care a pin for Mr Tripp's artistic salvation aside from the fact that he seems to repre-

sent so beautifully an incredible number of my countrymen. The futility of talking *to them* personally is self-evident. Art is not for them. But there are so many of them and they present such a stolid, immovable front against the things of the spirit, that there is always the recurring necessity for the few to state what stupidity costs the many.

It certainly costs us Degas. Degas, Renoir, Rodin, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin could not have lived here. They would have been strangled at birth. Such types exist and flourish only in free atmospheres. The rules of pedants and strict moralists do not apply. Genius is above such systems and supplies moralities of its own. It proves morality rather than is proved by morality—and that is the whole point which cannot be too loudly proclaimed. A moralist is a specialist and therefore not a whole person. He is deaf to the language of painting and has no clue to the emotions it awakens. How can he judge a thing of which he is ignorant? A “trial by one’s peers” is the demand of law and artists alone may judge of the “morality” of a work of art. To do *them* justice, though, I never hear them mention the word. They ask, rightly, whether it be a work of genius, and let it go at that. In settling that point they settle everything.

At the present moment there is an exhibition of drawings and paintings by Jules Pascin in town. Jules Pascin is a man of genius, the equal of Toulouse-Lautrec, Félicien Rops, and Constantin Guys. The dealer who shows them does not show all the Pascin drawings he now possesses. He asked me about several that he showed to me in private. “It would be all right in Paris,” he said. “No,” I advised him, somewhat wearily, “They would irritate Mr Tripp. Hide them in your darkest closet.” And he did so.

There was nothing naughtier in the drawings than a rather shy apprehension upon the part of the artist of feelings in the model that the model herself was unaware of. But they could not possibly be shown in New York. We lead a too constricted life and haven’t enough elasticity of mind to meet an artist half-way.

Mr Pascin didn’t like us during the few years he spent here. He didn’t say so, but it was surmisable from the haste with which he quitted us for his beloved Paris so soon as the war permitted Croatsians to live there. He thought New York cold, by the book and by the candle and every other way. Perhaps six people appre-

ciated his talent, certainly not more. But it was not lack of appreciation that drove him to Miami one winter and to Havana for the next, but the impossible straight-laced hypocrisy that de-humanized the people he saw and froze the artist in him. To the negroes of Florida and the half-breeds of Cuba he melted. "One does not have to draw prostitutes down there," he confided to me naïvely. Do I have to explain that remark? Oh, no, that would be too great an accusation against the intelligence of Mr Tripp; and besides I am not writing to him, but to the half dozen who understand.

Pascin's art is not necessarily for the closet, although I allow Félicien Rops' is. I am not a destroyer of society and ask nothing unreasonable of it. On the contrary it is merely reason I ask. There was a time when artists spoke as men to men. I suppose the Rev. Laurence Sterne thought he was writing only for men. Then came the *jeune fille* and at the general disquietude over the apparition one by one our artists fumbled. It was not I fear a question of morality so much as of finance. There seemed to be more money in purveying emasculated products. But the *jeune fille* epoch seems to be about over. The vote or the war or something seems to have finished her. She really reads and sees everything there is to be seen and may no longer be considered a menace to the artist.

. . . The essential to *him*, as I have said before, is unquestioned liberty. There must be no forbidding this and forbidding that to Shakespeares. An Elizabethan Tripp's spasms over the Venus and Adonis might have prevented Hamlet. The problem of Venus and Adonis and Rops' drawings is a minor one and their supposed, but to me negligible, dangers to the young may safely be left to take care of themselves.

HENRY McBRIDE

## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

THE bouquet sets Milhaud's music apart from that of the other members of his Group. The wine is older; of a mellow, smoother, drier flavour. The grapes which secreted it may not, it is possible, have grown in a soil as fat as that which nourished the fruit from which Poulenc and Auric distil. Milhaud's compositions record nothing quite as distinctive and personal as Poulenc's effortless wit and charm, and foetus-like gaiety; nothing as arresting and sharp as the directness, the relentlessness of attack which makes of Auric at once the most insolent and the most expressive of The Six. His work is more eccentric and external than theirs. Still, the grapes which gave this drink were riper when pressed. The liquor was permitted to stand sealed a longer while and exchange its violence for softness of texture. A felicity of touch which the others of the group do not as yet possess has played into the mould of many of Milhaud's fantastically various works; and given the most of them, at least seductive shapeliness and elaboration of surface. Through all the studied vulgarity and hardness there breathes the subtle scent of refined old worlds.

Milhaud is indeed an older musician than are the rest. Honegger was born some months before him, it is true. But Milhaud had gained his direction before any of the others were afoot. He was up and known before the war commenced; he was the only one who brought a growing reputation and cast it into the common pot. It is probable that something of the comparative warmth and vibrancy of his music is due his larger experience. His skill is very evident. He has learned to write for orchestra in such a manner that under his treatment small bands of instruments give forth volumes and sonorities which we commonly refer to the large size of the bands themselves. The music composed by him for *L'Homme et Son Désir* has a most vigorous throat; and yet, the number of instruments demanded by the score, if we except the battery, which is fairly large, and the singing-voices, does not exceed fourteen. He has acquired a freedom with the percussion-pieces which constitutes a little science. Like Satie and the rest of The Six, he has studied the noisemakers of the jazz bands for effects; and his orchestral works, the ballet and the ballade in particular, are brilliant with

colour produced by tambourines, cymbals, bass-drums, triangles, celestas, sandpaper, clap-boards, whistles, and other profane apparatus. His music, as a whole, is well written. With what elegance and quietude and humour has he not transcribed those jazzy tangos and Brazilian music-hall tunes! He has kept the melodic lines iron and clear among the dissonances; and still softened the banalities. The conflicts of rhythms, of tonalities, are managed with utmost economy of emphasis. The elegant little vulgarisms cross races with real success; combine the artistry and delicacy of the French with the vigorous coarseness of the Spanish and Latin-American popular rhythms in most agreeable form.

Some principle older and less sharp of edge and more soaked with the sun than that present in the other members of The Six must be in this composer, creating a terrain favourable to intellectual and acquired culture. Suavity and sensuousness and liquor-like richness must be in the plasm itself. Hence, even within the limits of the conventional group-expression; even in the circle of external and assumed ideas, Milhaud achieves a density and weight which distinguishes his work. Auric, and Poulenc in a lesser degree, may both of them be more true to themselves within the limits of the common mannerisms of the group; Milhaud's hand remains the happier, more delicate and gratifying. It may be the refinement is present in his personality as something like an unwelcome guest; as something which the possessor would gladly exchange for the lighter, tougher, and harder entrails of his two fellows. Nevertheless, the denseness, the brownness of blood stands him in good stead, and signals him despite his defects as the artist.

Variety of mood further sets the work of Milhaud apart from that of the others. To be sure, he remains the faithful partisan in whatever form he attempts. The common baggage of the movement, diatonic passages, little cocky-doodle-doo's for orchestra, excruciatingly dissonant contrapuntal effects, jazz-rasps and jerks, strutting march-rhythms, are carried through the range of his compositions. The hardness of edge, legacy of Berlioz, affected by him; the mordant irony; the broad grin with which much of the stuff is presented, are not his alone. But the Latin-American dance-hall tunes which he utilizes extensively are his own *trouvaille*. He appears to have become familiar with them during his sojourn as attaché in Brazil; and to have conceived the hope of doing with them what Chabrier and Bizet did with their Spanish forbears.

And the range of forms to which he has set hand, is unusually wide. He has written for piano, for voice and piano, for violin and piano, for flute, clarinet, oboe, and piano, for large and chamber orchestras. The music composed by him for the theatre includes a strictly operatic setting of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus; incidental music for the *Choephores* and the satyr-play of Claudel; ballet-music and the accompaniment to a sort of glorified vaudeville act. He has made songs on fragments of the tender and anguished letters of Eugénie de Guérin and on the sneering little *Soirées de Péetrograd* of René Chalupe. The list of his compositions includes sonatas and sonatinas, symphonies, and serenades classical in intention; a neurasthenic "Psalm" for men's chorus; and a "shimmy" for jazz band, a tango for the clowns of the *Cirque Médrano*, a "romance and rag-caprice," and a collection of Brazilian dances. And, to a certain extent, he has entered all these different subjects. The incidental music for *Protée* has Gallic verve and salt. There is something of real hysterical overwroughtness in *L'Homme et Son Désir* and in the song *La Limousine*. And the ballade for orchestra, and *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* and the *Saudades do Brazil* show genuine feeling for the character of the popular musical expressions of the day.

But although the ground-plan of Milhaud's work is vaster than Poulenc's and Auric's, the building seems somewhat shaky. His compositions exhibit musicianly tact of a superior sort, and marvelously alert sensibilities; they also exhibit power in a state of latency. It is seldom one of them thoroughly compels the interest on second hearing. What they have in them of reality, the smell of the crowd, the grinding of steely polyphonies, the nervous sudden unprepared contrasts of louds and softs, the iron contours and freedom from romantic exaltation and the jewellery of the impressionists, evaporates too quickly. The rich colour of the instruments has too little body. The pungence grows thin. On first acquaintance, *L'Homme et Son Désir* was poisonous and terrible. The human voices crying as they cry out of nightmares; the savage banging of the percussion; the whistles and wan monotonous flutes and brutal blaring of the horns, seemed to be carrying the insomnia of fierce tropical nights, the states of utter dejection when the whole force of nature seems bent on dissolving the character in slime and no doorway offers escape, the mad dance of inhuman rejected instincts, the depleted morning hours. One felt the music miasmal, suffocating as dead August nights, and stagnant-green; the instru-



mentation the very edge of to-day. But on second acquaintance, the baleful potency was out of it. The score was wearing sheer. It seemed the scratching of a surface, not the penetration of the subject-matter. The nerves only had been touched. The music wanted suspense and cumulative effect. A third hearing intensified the impression given by the second. The flute-gurgling music which accompanied the gyrations of the two women about the helplessly winding man; and the music of final exhaustion, seemed a little insipid. Indeed, the interpolated Brazilian tunes began to appear the most vital substance in the work.

The Six are clever; and it is precisely this cleverness which stands in the path of Milhaud, as it stands in the way of all of them. None of them are sufficiently attentive to the formless stuff of life. They are too conscious of unimportant matters. Satie has said of Ravel that his mouth rejects the cordon of the legion of honour, though his music demands it. Far truer is it that The Six outwardly reject the seriousness, the responsibility, and the priestly dignity maintained by certain musicians of the past, but inwardly persist in the sort of self-conceit which their lips deny. These young Frenchmen are somewhat over-concerned about their place among composers. They are somewhat over-eager to have us perceive in them the inheritors of Bizet and Chabrier; the representatives of the French genius for music; the pure Latin spirit amid the machinery and the jazz of the advancing century; the sole conservers of the classic proportions of Mozart and Mendelssohn. Milhaud would have us believe his compositions as innocent of programme as the dances of Bach. But the movement in which he plays a not unillustrious part is burdened with excess of literature. There is too much Cocteau in the practice of these musicians; too many of his theories concerning the future of the art. This is the distinctly unmodern aspect of The Six; for the sort of dry aestheticism by which they are possessed, although it is just coming to life in America, and seems to promise a few years of drought for us, is dying with great rapidity in the Europe about them. They themselves, in their intellectualism, represent a decadence far more than a new force. Retrospective theories tower dreadful above them like the demon-poles of an Alaskan tribe. The theories are often contradictory, as those of intellectualists often are. Milhaud will have it that the musicians of one nation do not learn from those of another. The indebtedness of the Russian Five to Liszt; of Chabrier to Wagner; of Debussy

to Moussorgsky; and of his own group to Strawinsky, to search no farther into musical history, seems of no importance to him. And still, we find him justifying his own form by the practice of P. E. Bach; and protesting that the proportions of his *Serenade* are those of Mozart.

In consequence, Milhaud is not sufficiently concentrated upon the formless spaces wherein his very self resides. He cannot lose himself to gain the everliving part. He is not free. It is as something of a Don Juan among the sheets of music-paper that he appears to us; finished too quickly with each of his compositions; over-ready to chase off and attack a new subject before he has really mastered the old. The fish is not more prolific than he; but of the eggs he scatters upon the flood few hatch completely free-swimming organisms. The person who declared that each composition of Milhaud contains at least one interesting idea spoke an almost final word. Sometimes, as in the sonata for flute, oboe, clarinet, and piano, he will achieve whole sections strong of line and exciting in rhythmic interplay; and then lose himself in a sort of "modern" acrid and empty classicizing. The sonata for piano solo, the *serenade*, the second *sinfonietta*, have each a solid middle-movement; but the outer two, in each case, with their strutting military rhythms, like to the one to which the French must have marched their troupes into the Ruhr, after some futile canonic imitations, get nowhere. Sometimes, as in the *Poèmes Juifs*, Milhaud will achieve one or two settings that are incisive and nervous; and then, as he has done in this series, place by the side of songs like *Le Laboureur* and *Le Forgeron* lyrics full of Massenet, or Duparc-like yodelling. Indeed, it is chiefly in the compositions in which the idiom is not his own, compositions of the sort of *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* and the *Saudades*, that he is entirely successful. These arrangements, and not his more personal expressions; not the reed and piano sonata, not the incidental music to *Protée*, not even the charming *Printemps*, constitute his completely satisfactory achievement. Doubtless, the power of concentration, of rigorous exclusion once acquired, rounded compositions of an entire personality would quickly give their weight to his fame. But, unless it is soon acquired, the transcriptions will for a long while retain the pre-eminence which to-day they enjoy.

PAUL ROSENFELD

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